

HALO: The Chain

by MEleeSmasher

Category: Halo, Star Wars

Genre: Adventure, Sci-Fi

Language: English

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2013-02-15 11:12:38

Updated: 2013-12-22 00:56:18

Packaged: 2016-04-27 04:03:22

Rating: T

Chapters: 12

Words: 122,158

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Taking place during and after, UH-60 NIGHTSTALKER's HALO: The Terran-Republic Affair. The Terrans appearance in the galaxy changed many lives, and this story aims to tell them how they did so. Multiple story branches, some parts tying in with Spartan Ops.

1. Episode 1

****This story is a tie-in to HALO: The Terran Republic Affair by UH-60 Nightstalker. His story is awesome and by far the most reviewed fanfic in the Halo/Star Wars section to date. These are a series of chapters that take place after the Evacuation of Coruscant. Characters you know (Ahsoka, Obi-Wan, Rex, etc.), new OC characters from Nightstalker (Morrison, Ross, Roberts, Escandor, etc) and totally new characters are going to be in this story. This story is a great opportunity to see the aftermath really sink in for individual characters. I own nothing, but my OC characters. To new readers, I suggest you read HALO: The Terran Republic Affair first or you will be lost. I also am going to take liberties as to answer some questions in the war and after that.****

****I own nothing except the OC characters later in the story. Halo is owned by Bungie 343, and Star Wars belongs to George Lucas, and now Disney (Here's me hoping they won't make a musical) ****

Episode 1: The New Dawn

{5 minutes after the rescue op in Coruscant.}

Overwhelming sadness.

That was the excruciating feeling Ahsoka is experiencing after she got onboard the UNSC Infinity class Reach.

She heard the Younglings, crying and sobbing with the Masters doing the best they can to calm them down, but the Masters themselves look

sorrowful and lost. And who could blame them? Everything that she had known, the Order, what they believed in and what they had had been blasted all the way to Coruscant's lower levels is enough to break even the most resilient of Jedi. She had been prepared for this scenario, the inevitability of casualties, but the actual experience it nearly crushed her completely. The clones, who she regarded as friends, have turned on her. The Chancellor, whose nice guy act was a cover to his most evil persona of Sith Lord Darth Sidious. But the most horrible part of it all: The Jedi was played from the start, and all the horrible things she experienced, and committed, during the war, all of the sacrifices done, were meant for nothing. She too would have been dead had the UNSC not interfered.

Normally, being rescued and being alive is supposed to be a good thing. Yes she was grateful, but the friends who had died, both in the Ion Cannon attacks and the ground-fighting, and the only home she knew burned into ashes, she felt, for the first time, at a loss. Her outward appearance depicted her as a courageous and spunky Jedi, who her friends looked up to in times of need. She had that emotional mask on until she found a secluded maintenance room near the hangar, and then began to weep. Her emotional peace that had been trained into her had disappeared with the Temple. Everything she experienced in the last few hours has physically and emotionally drained on her, if only she saved that youngling from the Clones, she wouldn't feel so depressed. The only thing that saved her from certain death was the sniper from Spartan Trinity team. She was grateful, but she wished she could have done more.

"Hello?" a male voice came from behind the door she came in. "Who's in there?" It didn't sound familiar, so Ahsoka guessed one of the marines heard her.

"Oh, um," Ahsoka stuttered "I'll be ri-"The doors opened up and the person on the other side was none other than Admiral Morrison. Ahsoka jumped slightly, earning a chuckle from the Admiral.

"I figured I'd check on our guests to see how their doing, but seeing you here is all I needed to know how you guys are holding up." Morrison remarked. Ahsoka blushed and quickly rubbed her eyes.

"I'm sorry; I should go find Master Obi-Wan and Skywalker." Ahsoka stepped out and began to walk but Morrison clasped a hand on her shoulder.

"I'm sorry we didn't save more of your friends in time. I truly am. If this provides any consolation, our people are gonna take you to Worth and you can stay there as long as you like, or until HQ says otherwise." The Admiral offered. Ahsoka was still somber, but gave a small smile and hugged the admiral, much to his shock and Ahsoka's.

The admiral simply smiled and hugged her back. She let go after a while, and looked completely embarrassed. "I'm very, very sorry! I didn't mean to do that!" Ahsoka said in panic. Again, Morrison chuckled. "I shouldn't have done that. I'm a Jedi! We're supposed to be calm and peaceful, and I blew that out of the sky. We're supposed to be the peacekeepers, but after everything that happenedâ€¦" she trailed off, looking more somber than before.

"I don't know much about alien emotional processing, but if you didn't do what you just did, I'd be even more worried." Morrison replied "Besides, someone needed a hug anyway. " Morrison smiled, and Ahsoka smiled too.

"I should go. Thanks admiral." Ahsoka ran off when the Admiral called her.

"You know, kid, Jedi or not, we all have a breaking point. I don't care how great a Jedi you are, we all have something to lose, and something to gain. In this case, you've lost and gained a lot. Remember that and count your blessings." Touched by the admiral's generosity, compassion and kindness, Ahsoka smiled brightly at Morrison's remark. And she went to the main hangar.

Morrison simply smiled and took out of his pocket a small holo pic of him and his family, a lovely wife and 2 sons, twins. He sighed contently. Even though he missed them, he would never abandon his duty to the UNSC. Besides, Morrison thought, Most of these Jedi were taken in a fashion similar to the old Spartan II project. At least let these kids have someone to look up to.

Even dark times have small silver linings.

* * *

><p>{15 minutes later€|}<p>

Ahsoka helped around here and there, trying to see where she was needed the most. After the fall, most Jedi inserted themselves amongst the Reach crew trying either to heal the wounded, console the grieving, making friends, or, for the most inquisitive of Jedi, learning more on the history of the Terrans, to see how they became the superpower that they are now today. Ahsoka, both feeling the need to help others and her curiosity creeping up on her, she naturally juggled all of them like a pro.

She helped out her friend Barriss Offee with the wounded Jedi and Marines in the sick bay for 3 hours, tending wounds and administering some medicine to the more severe cases. Thought Barriss was a good healer, the wounds needed some Bacta or Medifoam . Though the Reach was full of Bacta tanks and cans, they still ran out as the amounts of Jedi wounded were using them generously. Morrison realized that they needed to ration them down so that some of the more critically wounded could stay alive long enough to reach New Plymouth and their advanced med facilities. The Medifoam stores were put in place in the event that the Bacta ran out. In foresight, that was a smart move.

She felt relieved knowing that some of her friends, like Master Plo Koon, was okay, but she still felt sorry for those she couldn't other Jedi that didn't make it. The Jedi initiates Byph, Katooni, Ganodi, Zatt, and Gungi, the initiates she took Ilum to help build their lightsabers, were alive as well, but Petro did not make it, as he was shot in the back by a Clone Trooper, who paid for it with a bullet to the head by one of the Spartans.

The Padawan Pack, led by Zule Xiss, survived as well, which brought relief to Anakin Skywalker, who has lots of friends in that group. Unfortunately, not all of made it without wounds. Windo "Warble"

Nindo and Tae Diath were seriously injured, with the latter losing his left leg to a thermal detonator. Doctors assured Zule that they would recover, to which she breathed a sigh of relief. Her true leader, Aubrie Wyn, was still unconscious by a falling beam but aside from the bruises on her head, amazingly survived with little to no scars present.

While helping Barriss out, she also talked to some of the marines and found them more personable than the clones. Granted, she made friends with some of those clones and she knew not everyone in the Clone Army was a robot, but still acted with an obedience that disturbingly seemed to coincide with the Droids they fought. However, with the Terrans, every person she talked always have their stories, motivations, and even families of their own, whilst the Clones, no matter how smart or how likeable some of them were, are single-minded in their obedience to their superiors, and aside from the ARC troopers, Null Troopers and The Commandoes, she found out that the majority of the Clones were described as "Trained Animals carrying guns," by one observant marine she fought alongside during the battle in Coruscant.

One order from anyone from higher than their immediate commanders and they fell in line, regardless of their own opinions in the matter, as she found out the hard way.

The Chancellor played them all from the start, and she was mad. A Jedi was not supposed to feel anger, as that led to the dark side, but the years of pain she endured throughout the Clone Wars, coupled with the betrayals of the clones that they used to call friends made her more volatile than a Mustafarian volcano.

She seethed from time to time, but eventually calmed down. It wouldn't do well to anyone anyway.

Ahsoka also joined Jedi Master Lar, Librarian Jocasta Nu, and a few padawans in arranging the data crystals and storage devices from the Temple, or at least, arranging what was left. The rest burned with the Temple to stop the Sith Lord from claiming the knowledge in the Library. As she was doing her tasks, she also found data ports on the history of the Terran government, courtesy of Six, the AI in the ship.

She was fascinated and horrified with the history of the Terran humans. She was amazed by how many cultures in the Terran society, from an outsider's standpoint; they would be a galaxy of their own, regardless of their discovery of the Andromeda galaxy.

She also found some Terran novels fascinating, like Lord of the Rings. She took to reading these during her free time and enjoyed it immensely. She shared her discoveries to her fellow Jedi and they too were reading it as well. She particularly liked Aragorn, as it reminded her of Anakin.

Speaking of her old master, she bumped into him and Senator Amidala on her way to one of the cafeterias on the Reach.

"Oh, hey Sky Guy. I was wondering when I'd find you. When the Terrans said that this ship was large, I thought they were exaggerating." Ahsoka said. The ship was really impressive.

"Well, Snips, they do seem more advanced than we thought. If not for them, we'd be dead and still being kept in the dark." Anakin replied.

Ahsoka was about to say more until she noticed one little detail: The two of them were holding hands.

"Wait, why are you guys holding hands?" Ahsoka asked.

Padme and Anakin exchanged glances and came to a silent agreement. While the Council has been informed and gave their blessings to the married couple, the majority of the Jedi are still unaware of the news yet.

Anakin decided to break the news to her. Hopefully she'd take it well.

"Ahsoka, this is a long story and I think you may need to sit down for this."

* * *

><p>"WHAT?!"<p>

Well, that went well_, Anakin thought.

"You're telling me that not only are the Jedi allowing relationships, but you're married to Senator Amidala?! AND YOU DIDN'T TELL ME!" Ahsoka yelled that last part out.

"Well, actually I was married before that. Like about 3 years ago, so technically I was -"That was as far as he got before a well placed slap from Ahsoka shut him up.

"You were married before we met? Is this some kind of joke?! Why didn't you tell me?" Ahsoka asked.

Anakin was rather annoyed at this line of questioning. He knew that she wouldn't take it well, but this seems excessive.

"Why are you making this such a fuss? I'm under the assumption that you'd understand!" Anakin said in irritation. When he turned to look at Ahsoka, she seemed rather subdued.

"I'm just saying, you're my master and I've looked up to you and you've never kept anything from me. We're partners, and I thought you could share everything with me?" She snapped.

Anakin pursed his lips together and began to say in a tight, yet controlled voice, as if the next words to come out of his mouth will disgust him.

"It's because I'm afraid." Ahsoka's eyes widened. Anakin Skywalker, THE Chosen one of the Force, was afraid?

"Before I became a Jedi, I lived in Tatooine. The place is summarily described as a "hive of villainy" by the Jedi. I was a slave to a Junk Dealer, Watto. Me and my mom were the slaves to help around his shop. He wasn't bad per se, but he ain't a saint. He cheats people out of their money usually. I helped around and that made me a bit of

a whiz with mechanical objects and a good pilot. I was miserable, let me tell you. And I wanted to be more. To be more than a slave, but I was scared, "

"I was afraid that because all my life before I met Qui-Gon, I was nothing more than that slave boy who followed a toydarian junk dealer to survive. When I met him, I wanted to be just like him, and I did. But I also loved my mother, and when she died-"He cut off there as if the memory of her passing was too excruciating to bear. Ahsoka now felt bad she brought it up. Anakin recovered however.

"When she was gone, the person who stood with me was Padme," He took a moment to glance at his wife, who smiled at him "and I loved her, but I also want to stay as a Jedi. As a protector of the innocent and upholder of the just, I wanted to save lives like Qui-Gon and Obi-Wan did. But I also loved her, so I married Padme in secret." Ahsoka took a moment of silence before asking her former master.

"How were you found out?" Anakin smiled a bit.

"Let's just say that Master Yoda is very smart. I won't put it past him to not notice these types of things. I mean, I tried, but like he said, the only thing permanent in life is change. I think he knew for awhile, I don't know precisely when, but I do know that when he came to me, he was understanding and, praise the Force, he accepted it. I was nervous at first, when he brought me to the Council to address that issue, but in the end it worked out." Anakin smiled at Ahsoka, who returned that smile.

Ahsoka began to understand where his master was going through. Even though she started angry at the deception her master fed her, she ended up feeling sorry and happy for her master. To choose between the life you lived and the love of your life, Anakin was stubborn to have both.

She now wondered what would it feel like to fall in love. But that was a subject that would be brought up later, with Padme. Anakin saw in his former apprentice that he got his point through.

"I wished I shared this with you earlier. I'm sorry I did not trust this with you earlier."Ahsoka held her hand to signify she was fine with it.

"You have anything else to share with me?"Ahsoka prodded. Anakin's face became a bit somber, but not enough to wipe the smile he had in his face.

"I do, but I want to share it with you when the time is right. This secret is more than enough to satisfy you, I hope?" Anakin looked a bit nervous with that last part, but Ahsoka gave a sly grin.

"Don't sweat it, Sky Guy. I just hope from now on, you'd be more honest with me." Anakin smiled and placed his hand on her shoulder, then slung his arm across her back. "Don't mention it. Now, I think Padme was going to tell me something. Care to share it with me and my friend?" He and Ahsoka grinned mischievously.

If Padme didn't know better, she'd think those two were related. She was still deciding whether to be blunt or cautious about it; a funny situation, considering that she is a senator, and her foremost

talents were diplomacy and speech; well, that and her blaster skills notwithstanding. She fiddled with her fingers for a while then clapped her hands together as a sign that she made up her mind.

Ah, Sithspit, let him have then, he can handle it. After all, he is a Jedi anyway. Padme thought. Taking a deep breath, she said:

"Well, I'm pregnant." A silence came over the trio. It was so silent, that one could hear a pin drop.

Well, the thing that DID drop in the hall was Anakin, who staggered at first, muttering incoherently except the words "pregnant" and "father" before passing out. His protocol didn't take the news as bad as he did, however.

Ahsoka took this to mirth as she laughed soundly at the good news and her master's newfound ability to faint like a little girl. Padme simply smacked her head with her palm. Both women said the same thing at the same time with different tones as they said:

"Men."

* * *

><p>{S-Deck, 45 minutes after the conversation}<p>

The S-Deck was a level of the Reach dedicated solely for Spartans. With the Jedi, however, the place had to make room for the refugees. Besides, Trinity was the one that suggested that the Jedi took refuge there for awhile, and Morrison obliged.

Ahsoka was in amazement as she saw row upon row of similar looking cylindrical devices that seemed to hold the armor of the Spartans. Their armors, weapons, and even skills went beyond the most skilled Jedi combatant. Even though with their mastery of the Force, if they faced a Spartan, chances are they may get horribly wounded or killed considering how they fight. She also found out that the term "Spartan" is actually an old race of humans whose whole livelihood is revolved around warfare. Fitting, considering their combat prowess and adaptability in combat, that they be the name of their super-soldier program.

She saw Cin Drallig, The Jedi Battlemaster, with his former apprentice and now Jedi Knight Serra Keto look over some plasma sabers on a table with some other UNSC, Covenant and even some Forerunner weaponry on it. She decided to see what they were up to.

"Master Drallig, Serra. How are you guys?" Ahsoka Inquired. Cin Drallig gave a nod to Ahsoka before replying.

"Very well, thanks to our new friends in the UNSC. I must say, for a primitive race, they seem to have a very advanced set of technology not seen in this Galaxy." He said, holding a Type 25 Directed Energy Pistol, or Plasma Pistol, as it is most commonly called by the UNSC.

Serra nodded "That's an understatement; some of this tech is so advanced, there's no way any weapons company I know can recreate

this, and believe me, I know a lot of them." She replied, while marveling at a Z-130 Directed Energy Automatic Weapon, or Suppressor, and aiming downrange at a nearby target. She squeezed the trigger, and energy rounds ripped the target in seconds, turning the target dummy into a smoldering stump. Serra grew wide-eyed at the results and she smiled wryly at the gun.

"You know, for a Jedi, you seem to like these weapons a lot." Ahsoka pointed out.

Cin responded "Well, just because we are Jedi, and that we use elegant weapons does not mean we appreciate the weapon, Young Jedi. These UNSC soldiers use primitive slug throwers, yet have such advanced weaponry in their armory. As a battlemaster, one must wonder at how well such weapons work, to understand their workings, and in more desperate scenarios, use them as well."

Serra agreed with her former master, but she was bothered with one thing "No argument there, master. But I wonder why they don't just use this more often? These guns are obviously more advanced, so why still stick to slug-throwers?" Ahsoka was about to say her mind on the matter, but the marine in charge, Sergeant Alex Rasco, answered Serra's question.

"Well lady, it's because while advanced, those weapons don't have the versatility to adapt to an extreme environment. Sure our weapons are primitive, but they last longer and we can carry ammunition for it, but the Covenant Weapons need a large plasma generator to recharge, and the Forerunner guns are simply too costly to manufacture, produce and even reload. Only Spartans and certain ODST and STARU units get dibs on the guns. We grunts can use this when the situation demands it, of course, but that is few and far in between."

"But don't you think it'll be worth manufacturing it? This could save a lot of lives more with the type of firepower in your normal stocks. The plasma batteries on the weapons could be adapted to accept smaller batteries. And those silver weapons can be reloaded." Serra asked.

The Sergeant simply shook his head.

"Lady, those "plasma batteries" are prone to overheating. Even if you switch the power cell to have a more replaceable power source, the weapon would still overheat and the battery would be rendered useless as a result. Any other power source is too inefficient and can result in the weapon running out of juice faster. The Energy inside is very superheated gas, and the weapon keeps it cool within a magnetic field until fired. So in short, your idea could make the gun even more useless than before. And with those Forerunner guns, yes they can be reloaded, but the ammunition is still rare, since we are still experimenting with Hardlight tech. So before we jump to the energy guns, we stuck to the ones that shoot lead. You get my explanation?" The Sergeant asked.

Serra sighed, but nodded. "Yeah, just seems like a shame though."

Alex just scoffed. "Please, they superheat flesh, yet when you want to make a statement, bullets can chew enemies in a way that energy weapons cant. They cauterize the wound on contact, but OUR guns can

bleed the enemy, so in short, OUR weapons do the most damage." He emphasized OUR as the Terrans.

"So your saying when it comes to putting some fear in the enemy, you believe your weapons do the job well?" Cin asked.

Alex nodded "Master Drallig, is it? Well, Master Drallig, the reason is that when a bullet impacts on skin, it tears flesh, muscle, bone, nerves, and blood vessels. The enemy bleeds, and gets a wound far worse than a blaster shot. After all, these "primitive weapons" can make someone bleed. Trust me, our bullets are meant for collateral damage."

"That's just cruel." Ahsoka snapped "Why do you have to do such a thing?"

Alex gave her a hard stare "There's an old saying: Know your enemy and know yourself, find naught in fear for 100 battles. Know yourself but not your enemy, find level of loss and victory. Know thy enemy but not yourself, wallow in defeat every time. Do you know what that means?"

Ahsoka and Serra shook their heads, but Cin Drallig understood.

"It means to say that knowing yourselves and your enemy, you can use strategies your enemy is not accustomed to, and you can use it against them as a result."

"Exactly. These slug-throwers are completely unknown weapons to you, but everyone in the Andromeda figures that their still primitive and as a result, think it is also inefficient." Rasco gave a rolling gesture with his hands, gesturing the Jedi Battlemaster to continue.

"So as a result, you are underestimated and put in a position where the enemy believes you can do no harm to them and giving you the ability to move to a position of strength. By the time the enemy realizes they you can punch through them as easily as they can, they will be caught off guard. Isn't that right?" Cin finished, asking the last part to Rasco.

Rasco nodded his head. Serra was impressed of the soldier's knowledge and asked "Where did you learn that from?"

Alex Rasco grinned "We learned it when I was still in college. Corbulo Academy was where I got my combat knowledge and tactics. The person who I got that phrase from is from an ancient Chinese general who was named Sun Tzu." He walked over and typed a few commands in a nearby console, which then turned to a holographic image for all three Jedi to see.

They saw an old man in rather ornamental armor, with a white wispy beard on his face and he was on a creature with four legs, a hairy tail and a long head.

"He was the military strategist in China, a country located on Earth, and he was famed for creating rather unorthodox, but very effective strategies and battle plans when fighting his foes, and he wrote a book called the Art of War, which details all his battle plans and theories. It also works in helping curb some problems in economy."

Alex walked over and provided a holopad with the said book and gave it to the Jedi.

Cin, Serra, and Ahsoka looked it over and were impressed with it. Ahsoka realized that the Terrans were more adept in war than she thought, and judging by the looks of deep thought and concentration her companions had on their faces, they were also impressed.

She decided she lounged around long enough, and headed over to the other table.

She was amazed at the complete differences of their weapons, from the bulky ICWS that the majority of the UNSC use, to the powerful yet slim looking Z-250 Directed Energy Engagement Weapon, aka the Lightrifle. This latter weapon made blaster rifles look like primitive slug throwers. She was amazed at how the rifle constructed itself when Cin held it up, and he too was impressed. Serra found some fondness with the Needler rifles. Even though they were Jedi, the variety of firepower they were browsing was very impressive.

Another thing that Cin and Serra pointed out was why the UNSC still used Kevlar armor, when it is practically useless against blasters. Alex Rasco was unable to answer until Six, the AI of the ship, came to answer that question.

"I've been listening in on your conversation and I can answer that one."

"The R&D guys in the CBMI have been researching armor that was durable enough to last 5 or more blaster shots while still keeping the lightweight form of the Kevlar. The new armor, dubbed the Crysis armors, is the ultimate in nano technology, with some abilities that are still classified to tell. The prototypes are coming here to arm some of the STARU and ODST units. For the soldiers, a less powerful yet more easily available version is still in development, but estimates show that it will be available for the jarheads in about a month or so, with another 2 months getting a shipment here."

Seeing as though she stayed around long enough, Ahsoka walked away, bidding farewell to Alex, Cin and Serra, to head over to the rooms occupied by the Spartans. Her curiosity about the fabled super-soldiers was based on their combat performance on Coruscant. No normal human can do what they do, so she decide to head in and ask how they can do the things they do.

She had met Trinity team in one of the armor rooms, as they were polishing some of their guns, exercising or just lounging around. She had a rather thoughtful chat with those Spartans and thought they were more than just scary metal giants with golden visors and weapons that tear clones in half. She was in a chat with the team's medic, Mary about her encounter with General Grievous.

"No way, you killed Grievous?" Ahsoka asked in shock. Mary simply shrugged but had a rather smug grin on her face.

"For all of that stupid cyborg's posturing, his bark was simply worse than his bite. Besides, once he realized that our armor is more than 5 times his body weight, he simply broke like a child's toy."

Ahsoka was amazed at some of Trinity's exploits. The fact that their medic took on Grievous single-handedly and won over him is a testament to how good the Spartans are in combat. She was actually amazed that their group was the one that lopped off the leadership of the droid army, or rather, the former Separatist leader, as the coup that was pulled off by Mina Bonterri had severely weakened Dooku's position.

Raymond, Trinity's leader, laughed when he recalled to Ahsoka the looks of Dooku's followers as he and Daniel blasted through those ranks like wheat before a harvester. Even Dooku was easy kills as he literally vaporized in a bloody manner, leaving his hands and lightsaber to confirm the kill. She asked where the Sniper of Trinity team was. Jackson, the team's heavy, was the one to reply.

"I think he's with his wife to be. After everything that's happened I'm sure a little privacy for those two is a well deserved one."

It was no secret that Daniel and Riyo Chuchi were engaged. Ahsoka decided to talk to Trinity's sniper for another time. She then asked about the history of Spartans and the details of the Scandal that rocked the UNSC and sent ONI out the window. She knew of the Scandal through talking some marines during the beginning of the Clone Wars, but has yet to fully find out the details of it. She was also told that the Spartan IV program allowed its members to leave at anytime. Ahsoka was mildly surprised, but it was only a moment. She was amazed at these super soldiers that she momentarily forgot that they were people and sometimes people find something worth doing more than their profession. She then decided to find about the history of the Spartan project before the Spartan IV program and left the room.

Before she did, Raymond directed her to Six, the ship's AI. Thanking them, she left to find Six.

Ahsoka learned a lot through the AI, Six, who was also based from a Spartan as well. Six also informed them of their pasts, and she felt a sense of, well, shame and pity.

When she first heard of them, it was the Spartan scandal that was gossiped and rumored around Mesa. She was with Senator Amidala as she was unsuccessfully trying to rally the Terrans' support. She overheard some soldiers talking about it and decided to inquire upon it. Those soldiers told her about the scandal, how it destroyed the lives of children and how the now defunct ONI got away with it, until the leak. She was shocked at how the situation developed at the time. The disturbing part was how similar it was to how the Jedi recruit younglings, but the difference was that the Terrans didn't even need to be subtle, unlike the Jedi, who had to endure Anti-Jedi sentiment due to the process.

The Terrans however, covered their tracks and even cloned an imperfect copy so that the family will believe that their child died naturally, when in fact, was taken away to become super-soldiers. The Office of Naval Intelligence, or ONI, was frankly more brutal than the CBMI. She hoped that the CBMI would do no such thing in the future.

The Jedi garnered much hate from the populace due to the fact that they take newborns and younglings away from parents, with the "Baby

Ludi" case the most notorious. She opened a holo tab and it read:

Ludi Billane, a young force sensitive Human, was discovered on the planet Ord Thoden, after an earthquake shattered the city Domitree, a city where she and her mother, Jonova Billane, lived. She was brought to the temple, and gave her a new name "Aris-Del Wari" before inducting her as a youngling trainee in the temple.

Her mother found out, and the Anti-Jedi sentiments came to flare at the peak. She was very young when the protests outside the Temple began rallying against the Jedi. Although the case was later forgotten, the anti-Jedi sentiment prevailed. She came to know of it fully when she was a Padawan, when she looked around the Holonet while researching on the topic of "Jedi status in the Galactic Stage"

Ahsoka hopes that one day, the Jedi can come back stronger than before, and hopefully, better than before. The steps taken to improve that image has already begun.

The announcement about Anakin's marriage to Padme sent shockwaves throughout the Jedi populace of Reach. Some hardliners took it badly, but the rest were accepting, some more so. It turns out, some Jedi have also had relationships and because of the changes, felt better than before.

Etain Tur-Mukan was among the first to admit her relationship to Clone Commando Darman of Omega Squad. Many were shocked that she married to a Clone, since many of them felt bitter about the loss of their friends and their home at the hands of the Clone Army. More Jedi came forward, either declaring love to another Jedi, or telling the others they had a loved one but are located in different areas of the galaxy for fear of the war spreading. Zule Xiss was also part of such confession, with the bounty hunter Marik Mereel-Orar, and newly Knighted Jedi Kass Tod and Mak Lotor kissed right there and then, with a few Marines and even some Jedi cheering them on.

Even Obi-Wan was acting a bit strange around Siri Tachi, who herself was acting just as awkward. Unfortunately, Raymond called the two out on it, since he recognized such signs when he himself met his wife. Eventually the two talked about it, and decided they would continue this matter some other time, preferably when there were not a lot of people to watch them. But judging the happy looks on their faces, they may do actually pursue a relationship.

Of course, some Marines decided to try their luck and hit on some lovely Jedi females. Ahsoka found some funny moments as most of them got shot down by some rather pretty, yet uninterested Female Jedi warriors. Serra Keto, however, was asked to go out on a date with a nervous looking Marine, who actually was only 21 when he enlisted. The girl was about his age and she even winked at him before walking away. The boy walked over and the Marines cheered for him, and some cashed checks in. The boy himself, however, looked like he won a million credits. Ahsoka later learned that he was Corporal Charles Witterfield, a young man hailing from the Milky Way galaxy, specifically planet of New Harmony.

This is not the first time they met, but that story was for another time. He and Serra would later go on a date in New Plymouth, much to

Cin's dismay (and secret approval).

All in all, the atmosphere was one of joy and celebration, a far cry from the despair seen a few hours ago

Just as they thought things could not get any better, Admiral Morrison came as well with an announcement that shocked the Jedi: Some of the clones actually defected.

Ahsoka was ecstatic to learn that Rex defected, as his crew and that of the Torrent Company and the Slice Hounds had defected as well. As a bonus, they have a Venator class Cruiser that they and a few Spartan teams hijacked (That's a story for another time). Best of all, according to them, they had schematics on the New Ion Cannon weapons that was used to disable the Reach. Morrison assured the Jedi that they can make good use of those. A few more clone battalions rebelled but are still in hiding until they can move to TUG territory. Mantis Company and the Whole of Hades Corps, led by Clone Commander Trips, are already in Andromeda with some of the Jedi that didn't make it to the Temple before the attack. Some more Jedi are out there but Morrison received communication that those other Clone Battalions are moving in to pull them out.

Etain breathed a sigh of relief when she heard that her husband and the rest of his brothers and her "Father" Kal was able to get out in time. But she was also confused as to why their transmission was in being tracked at Kashyyyk, but got her answer in the form of a hulking blue figure standing behind Kal, who was the one who responded the transmissions.

He had a large white metallic chest plate, with a blue eagle crescent on the left breastplate and a red helmet on the right. He had rather bulky shoulder plates and was wearing a helmet that had a slick blue visor. (**AU Note: Think a cross of Commander Palmer's Helmet in Spartan Ops Episode 9, and his chest plate a bulkier and more armored version of the Commando Chest Plate in Halo 4).**

The Jedi were wide-eyed at the man's appearance. She knew Spartans were tall, but the way he towered over Kal seemed a bit intimidating. It was still a sight they were getting used to.

"I think I can answer that, Master Jedi. Commander Lance Escandor, of Lost Legion. I lead a battalion of Spartan IVs on the UNSC Preston Cole, but we came in advance. Sorry we only just arrived to the party. We took our party to the jungle, instead." He then turned his armored head to Morrison "Primary objectives completed, admiral. We are on route to New Plymouth. ETA in 5 hours." Escandor acknowledged Morrison and saluted.

Admiral Morrison returned it and replied "Acknowledged, Commander. I trust Operation Blind Side didn't have any setbacks?"

"Affirmative." Escandor replied "We got the plans for their "Secret" Weapons, especially one called "Ion Cannon". Not so secret anymore when the eggheads scan them."

Morrison nodded. "We got hit hard by those bastards with that Ion weapon. Hopefully, we can develop a countermeasure to that one with those plans. Excellent work."

Escandor then turned his attention to Etain. "You must be the lovely lady that Darman and Kal Skirata's been swooning about." Etain, to her credit, kept a straight face.

"I am flattered, but unfortunately I am already married." Etain answered. "Can I talk to Darman? I want to ask him about our son's whereabouts." Inwardly, she was worried. The last 24 hours were stressful and in that time she forgot about her son. She was frightened that she forgot little Kad'ika in Coruscant.

Lance sensed her discomfort because he answered her immediately.

"Well I was told by Darman that your friend Nyreen took your kid off Coruscant before he came over, so your son is probably at Glinn's Field by now." Etain was now visibly relieved. Her family was safe.

"It's been fun talking to you all but we should be heading out now. We will debrief Fireteam Trinity later when we reach the base. Signing off." And with that, Lance disconnected the link. Ahsoka thought she saw Morrison shake his head. Morrison then turned to the Jedi and informed them of their location: Glinn's Field, Angelika Island, which is about half a mile from New Plymouth itself. They were still out by 2 hours, but they would get there.

* * *

><p>{Glinn's field, Angelika Island CDF base, 24 hours later}<p>

Glinn's Field is New Plymouth's premier air base. It is an artificial island located south of the city and houses most of the airpower of the UNSC in the island. Armed with anti-air guns, anti-armor laser defense grids and even some bunkers surrounding the island, it is clear that any attack would give the enemy massive loss of life in trying to attack it. Underneath is where the main complex and the hangars are present.

Although the times were grim, some didn't let it get them down.

She looked over and saw more good tidings: Etain and her Husband, Darman hugging and kissing one another, with the former holding her son Venku in one hand, and another around her husband's head. The Clones and Kal Skirata, who was with Darman the whole way, watched nearby. Ahsoka also caught glimpse of Spartans in different armor specs and colors moving to a room nearby.

_Must be from Lost Legion, _She thought.

The Clone defectors and the remaining Jedi soldiers arrived recently after gathering the hiding elements of the Jedi scattered in the Galaxy.

A few hollers and wolf-whistles from the CDF and even some the Clone defectors echoed around the complex, as they saw some Jedi rush and hug people in a manner that can only be described as intimate.

Some of the Jedi were still scarred with the events of the battle, so they were recommended by Morrison to see some psychiatrists in the

base. The first patient in was Master Shaak Ti, who had really took the loss of Coruscant hard, and Ahsoka hoped to the Force that these Terrans can help her in recovering swiftly. More would come in the following months.

She was also seeing some Twi'Leks and Togrutans around, helping out the Terrans, or in some cases, patrolling around in UNSC armor. These new aliens that have been taking refuge in New Plymouth actually had become part of the Terran colonists, helping out and some of them joined the UNSC and CDF forces, a fact which stunned both Jedi and UNSC personnel alike, as both know that the UNSC is always comprised of humans. The fact that aliens were now part of the UNSC and CDF represents significant change within the galaxy at large. The repercussions of this move would be unclear, so only time can tell if this was the right move, allowing the aliens to join the UNSC.

Ahsoka smiled as she and her friends watched a film from one of the soldiers, who went by the name and rank of Private 2nd class Jason Surlis, as they kept their guests entertained. It was called Batman Begins, which is followed by The Dark Knight and the The Dark Knight Rises, which his buddy, Corporal Duran Gento, also brought. Their CO ordered them thrown to the garbage but then changed the order at the last minute to entertain the guests. Ahsoka looked on as a couple of Padawans and even some Knights took interest about a man dressed as a bat doing things a that even a Jedi could not do is well, interesting to watch. The Padawan Pack, all healed up, watched as well, some holding hands with loved ones. Aubrie Wyn looked in the direction of Ahsoka and smiled at her, gesturing her to join them.

The Togrutan smiled brightly. The Jedi may no longer have a home, but they had friends. And hopefully, someday, they would win the galaxy back from the Sith Lord that held the Republic at the reins. She still has hope that things will get better.

And with the UNSC, that hope will turn to reality soon enough.

****This is only the beginning. This story will have multiple story arcs and will take place before and after the end of HALO: The Terran-Republic Affair.****

****I have two story arcs coming up, one dealing with the Skirata clan in the wake of the discovery of Order 66, and their involvement with Fireteams Crimson and Outlaw, and the other will take place during the early parts of the war, during the Jabiim campaign. IF you know the Padawan Pack, then you know where I'm going, with some major differences.****

****I have one more story arc coming up, and is tying in with a recent Spartan Ops episode 9, The Janus Key. This will take place in the when the UNSC Preston Cole enters into the fray, and we will finally discover how humans populated the Andromeda Galaxy. ****

****This is a rather new thing for me, so I will wait at least a week until sufficient reviews are made.****

****Also, Kudos to Patriot-112 with some of his characters, who he allowed me to borrow and write them in. They are awesome to read.****

****I would also like to point out that none of this would not have been possible if UH-60 Nightstalker did not allow this to happen. I will wait for more reviews so that I know what the readers think before going on the next one.****

****Reply and Review please. ****

2. Episode 2

****This chapter is the first story arc, concerning Clan Skirata during the discovery of Order 66. The chapters will be named in parts after the Mandalorian Marriage Contract. I know that Etain was briefly mentioned in the story, but here she and her extended family take center stage.****

****The next story arc planned will also be a flashback arc.****

****Also, note that they will still appear in later chapters, just not in the next arc, because I read the Battle of Jabiim during the clone wars.****

****And note, the chapters will get shorter. I only wrote that first chapter because I have had time to make it. Some chapters will take longer and as a result take just as long to upload.****

****Oh, and some chapters take place in the PAST AND PRESENT, so I will mark it down on which is which. ****

****The chapter will take place 8 months before Operation Good Neighbor.****

Episode 2: Mhi Solus Tome.

{Coruscant, 8 months ago, The Past}

Etain Tur-Mukan was in the Library of the Temple, looking for some star maps for use in some Separatist locations that have the Republic in a deadlock. The Maps would be used to help find paths that safely traverse over the outer rim planets, which are being blockaded by Separatist patrols. She had only arrived from a campaign at Haurgab, where the local warlords supplied the Separatist forces with locations of local GAR convoys. She and Omega Squad and Delta Squad were tasked with stopping these raids.

She realized the tactical uselessness of the planet and advised a withdrawal, claiming that not only is the planet useless in the long run, and the resources to take it would be put to waste, she also pointed out that it would be much of a problem to the enemy as it is to the Republic. Eventually after a few skirmishes and a major offensive, the Republic pulled back. She had just came back to find some maps to find anything to find another path around the droid army patrols in order to sabotage the droid war machine. That and she had another reason for coming back: She was going to tell Darman about Venku.

She had been secretly in a relationship with the Clone Commando for about more than a year, and then gave birth to Venku, but was unable to tell him. Although she intends to remedy that and more; she also

plans to tell Darman that she will leave the Jedi.

It was a hard decision, but her love for her son and husband was more than her dedication to the Jedi Order, so it was decided that after doing this, she would tell Darman her plans, and hope to the Force that the future will turn out for the better.

That would have come to pass, but that would take a detour as of this moment.

Obi-Wan stepped in the library, with Ahsoka Tano in tow. Etain noticed that they seemed rather in a rush, and she also saw that Obi-Wan had been holding a data crystal in his hand and wondered if it was another report. Normally, she would not care if it was just another data crystal, but the look on Kenobi's face seemed to be one of worry. Curious, she decided to head towards the duo as they came to a nearby holo terminal. Already there was, and working on it, Jocasta Nu, the head librarian of the Jedi Archives.

"Master Kenobi, it is good to see you." The elderly woman gave a welcoming smile.

"Yes, and you too, I must ask some assistance with opening this data crystal, please." He asked. Jocasta nodded and loaded the crystal in and began typing some commands to open the crystal's information matrix. Etain finally gave in and decided to join in on the conversation.

"Master Kenobi, something troubles you?" she asked. Obi Wan simply had a concerned look.

"You could say that." Obi-Wan replied.

"Is there something the matter? Where did you get that crystal?" Etain inquisitively asked.

Obi-Wan sighed "To be honest, I got it from a "tourist" just outside of the Temple. She was asking for directions and slipped this inside my robe. I am just going to assume that this must be very important that she gave this to me without telling it to me straight."

Etain smirked a bit "You must be getting old if a girl half your age was able to slip a crystal inside your robes." Etain then turned serious "Whatever the case, I fear that the person, or persons, involved with it are not your usual collaborators of the Republic." She had, from experience, gained allies of convenience in the past. True, they were no lovers of the Republic, but even they believe the Separatists are worse, and that was good enough for her to win skirmishes. Obi-Wan nodded in agreement.

"Indeed. Whoever did this maybe doing this for their own benefit; they would not give something to us without expecting much in return."

"Whoever "they" are, I'm sure that we will find out their identities once we discern the contents of that crystal. I'm sure that Jocasta Nu will find that out, won't you?" Etain asked that last part to the librarian in charge, but when she and Obi-Wan turned to her, she looked as though she'd seen a ghost. Obi-Wan, who, up until this point, was mildly curious, was now worried.

"Master Nu, what is wrong?" Jocasta blinked at Obi-Wan a few times before regaining her posture, and took a deep breath before speaking.

"I think it would be best if I showed you, Master Kenobi. What is on this crystal is not meant to be said, rather than to be shown." Her face was now impassive, but the emotions that raged behind her face were one of confusion and apprehension. Obi-Wan felt it, and he too had some sense of apprehension in approaching the terminal. Whatever scared the old master was not meant to be taken lightly. Obi-Wan booted up the terminal which Master Nu turned off.

Etain and Ahsoka exchanged glances of worry before heading over to Obi-Wan's terminal. Jocasta Nu seemed to head over and take a seat, her mask of impassiveness seemingly cracking under the information she uncovered.

The information must be dire if Jocasta Nu herself is reeling from it Etain thought.

Obi-Wan headed over and began to type some commands. What he found was the full manifest of orders that were implanted into the clones during their training. He knew most of these orders but one was marked in red.

ORDER 66.

Obi-Wan Kenobi was a man who was of calm demeanor and stoic professionalism. Yet when he opened the file, it was like opening a maw to a dark abyss.

The order dictates that, when given, would brand all Jedi as traitors of the Republic and have them be executed sight on seen by the very same army that the Jedi had lead into battle on many occasions. The most troubling part of this order was that it was to be given by the Chancellor himself.

It was basically an order of execution. Obi-Wan could hardly comprehend the horror if such an order was to be given. His two colleagues had similar ideas.

Ahsoka was shocked. She was close friends with Rex and Cody. The fact that they would be her soon to be killers had unnerved her to the core. But the hardest hit was Etain.

She was closer to the clones than any Jedi in the Temple; even Obi-Wan knew how she took each clone death personally. But even he did not know HOW close she is to the Clones. She is in even love with the Clone Commando, Darman, who has also the father of a son he himself does not know. The only people who knew were her and Darman's mentor Kal Skirata. To think that he man she lovedâ€¦

No, inconceivable. She refused to accept that the man she loved had a code in his head that would program him to gun her down no better than a droid. There was only one way to figure it out.

It was to tell him everything. Even if the truth is more painful than getting shot.

She turned away with her hand on her mouth, controlling her urge to let the tears flow freely in her eyes. She muttered her permission to leave and walked briskly away, without acknowledging the Jedi around her, but judging from the looks of utter despair on the faces of Obi-Wan and Ahsoka, they didn't care for her much. She walked out, her original purpose for being there seemingly forgotten. Her mind numbingly registering the environment as a mere blur, with the sound of every being in the Temple reduced to nothing.

She was still engulfed with her inner turmoil as she headed to the apartment that she and Darman shared.

Obi-Wan numbly took the crystal, before composing himself and start to run towards the council chambers, alerting all members to come immediately to the Council. He still did not yet know who gave him this crystal, but alerting the Council was a much more pressing issue at the moment.

{GAR Headquarters, Briefing room A-5, 6 hours later}

Darman had just finished writing a report to Commander Cody when his personal communicator, beeped a message. This particular communicator was only designed to contact one person.

Etain.

Quickly excusing himself, he left the room where he gave the report and found a nice, quiet spot in the Barracks, hoping that no one would eavesdrop. He activated the small device and saw some text on it.

"_Meet me in out apartment. Please come as soon as you get this.___
Gar__Cyar'ika, Etain."_

Darman was happy. Not an emotion you'd normally describe the elite of the GAR, but Darman's newfound love for his Jedi companion was one that gave him happiness, relief and a sense of serenity he has not felt in a long time.

So why was it that now he had a sense that something bad was coming?

Thinking it was just his frazzled nerves, he headed out to the residential district of Coruscant. He was about to head to the docks where he has a personal transport when he bumped into his old mentor, Kal Skirata.

"You seem to be a bit in a hurry, adiik. Off to see your jetii cyar'ika?" The old man joked. Darman snorted.

"Please, spare me, ruug'la jag, I'd been off for a while now, so the least could do is be with her for the night."

"Coincidentally, I happen to be going there myself. Hope you don't mind if I tag along?"

Darman sighed "You're not driving this time. I nearly got Kyr'amur with that sort of reckless driving." Kal smirked a bit.

"Don't worry, you get the controls for now, I want to relax anyway,

and see Etain."

"I'm just hoping that things will slow down for now for me and Etain to relax." Darman hoped, but sadly in a galaxy in conflict, the hope for less bad news, seems to have all but disappeared.

{Darman and Etain's Apartment; 2 hours later}

Darman and Kal stepped out of the elevator that led to the room where he and Etain "shared" during their down time. When they entered they found Etain walking around, lost in thought as she simply hugged herself and looked at a window overlooking the Coruscant skyline.

She was wearing a rather beautiful gown that showed off her curves nicely. Darman looked as though his armor was choking him up. Kal suppressed the urge to laugh at Darman's look on his face, but all joviality ended when both men looked at Etain, who looked as though she'd been found a dead relative.

Darman took notice "Cyar'ika, what's wrong? I received the message, so I came here as fast as I can."

Etain took a deep breath before asking in an uncharacteristically small voice "What is Order 66?"

And then the illusion of peace shattered.

Darman's heart skipped a beat. _How did she know?_

Ever since the early days of his training, Darman and his brothers learned that there are specific orders implanted in his mind long before they got out of the tubes they were born in. One of those orders was more specific than others. Even though they were not taught the Orders directly, they still knew it.

Unlike the normal clone, Clone Commandoes and Null Clones are trained more extensively and given higher intelligence as a result. These troopers were trained extensively by highly skilled Mandalorian bounty hunters, Kal included. Not even they knew of Order 66. Of course, the setback is that when it comes to obedience, the clones have been known to question orders. The Kaminoans were not concerned, however. They knew nothing else, so they were confident their loyalty will still be with the Republic.

Unfortunately, falling in love was not part of the plan.

Now Darman was in a situation where loyalty has now come into question.

While Darman was still formulating a response, Kal's response was more immediate.

"What are you talking about?"

Etain turned to face Kal and recounted the events earlier today. By the end of that conversation, Kal had a look that crossed between confused and absolute horror.

"This is absurd; the Kaminoans would never, ever do something of this

magnitude. They'd never stand for it." Kal said with authority.

"I've checked with the Council, they informed me and possibly the other Jedi about this as well. We are all in shock, Kal. We were told to keep this quiet until we they got more information but-"She looked down and Kal saw she had some tears glinting on her cheeks. Kal realized that she had taken it hard.

"I wanted to know, if the man I loved will be the same man who ends me life." She looked up, tears in her eyes.

Darman looked at her and realized that his pain reflected hers. Mustering whatever strength he had, he replied:

"Yes, I knew." Etain took a sharp breath, while Kal simply looked on in disbelief.

"Why was I not informed?" Kal asked in shock.

"This order was implanted long before we were even born. We learned of the orders when most of us came in the training phase, when we were still learning the basics in our holopads and our teachers. You met us long after those days, but we still remember than clear as day."

"So you didn't think it relevant to inform me and Etain about it?"Kal's voice raised in tone.

Darman knew that Kal was starting to get angry and defended himself. "I never thought that they would be ever implemented. The Jedi would never turn their backs on the Republic!"

"Have you ever thought of the fact that some utreekov from Coruscanta might be giving the order itself, and can even do so even if the Jedi didn't go AWOL?! Come on, ad, I taught you better than that!"

Darman found this bit hypocritical.

"How should you know better then, when you yourself taught us that we should be loyal and obedient to the Republic itself?"

"And to family, Darman. I taught you to be, above all else, loyalty to your family, Dar!"

"Damnit, Kal! I know that I lied, and for that I'm sorry, but don't you think I'm in the same predicament as you are!? I'm no dumb brute, Kal. You taught me better than that, and I believe you should give me benefit of the doubt. I know where I stand." Darman ranted.

Kal was still a bit furious at his behavior and knowledge, but he had a point. He knew that Darman loved Etain more than his loyalty to the Republic. He loves her too much to even do so.

Besides, venting his frustrations on Darman will not change the fact, so he might as well douse the fires before they spread.

"Look Dar, I'm sorry I sprung at you like I did, but this is serious. I know you would never do anything to harm your family." Kal placed his hand on Darman's shoulder reassuringly. "Besides, I am not the

one to give apologies." He turned Darman around so that he could face Etain.

Darman was glad that he and Kal got this resolved, but now? He had to deal with Etain.

Carefully walking towards her, Darman made his way to Etain, who slightly inched herself away from Darman. Sensing her hesitance, Darman was figuring a way to gain her trust when he spotted her lightsaber on a table near the bathroom. Darman made up his mind and grabbed the lightsaber and then walked towards her. Etain was then backed to a corner, her eyes betraying the fearlessness on her face. He then headed toward her and handed her lightsaber, with the thumb on the ignition, and the end of weapon pointed near his heart.

Etain's fear of him betraying her evaporated when she saw what he was doing.

"What are you doing?" Etain asked her voice hoarse from the sobbing.

"You think I'd betray you? You?! Haar'chak, Et'ika! Ever since my time living in Kamino, I thought of nothing more than to be sent to battle. What I found there was death and misery, and I had never felt any happiness until I met you. I will never bring harm to you, but if you truly think I am the mindless clone trooper that will gun you down, then, Re'turcye mhi, Etain. Ni kar'taylir darasuum gar."

Kal saw this was a foolhardy move. He trusted Darman to resolve this, but even for him this seemed rather idiotic. Kal was about to end this bout of stupid until Etain snatched the lightsaber and tackled Darman to the ground, her eyes now awash with new tears, all the while punching her lover's chest.

"Di'kutla utreekov! What made you think that I wanted you to kill yourself!?" She sobbed, her emotions seemed to balance at grief and anger. Darman may have gone a bit too far with that stunt. He looked over to Kal and saw stern anger and concern in his eyes. Darman knew what they meant.

We'll talk about that later. Kal seemed to convey that message to Darman without saying it. Aside from Darman, Kal was very close to Etain, to a point that he regarded her as a daughter he never had.

"I was scared. Scared that you, after all we've been through, is the same person who would gun me and your child down like hapless battle droids. I was scared, but I'm even more so when you tried to kill yourself just so that I would be safe?! I love you, but if you ever do that again, I will beat you within so badly that not even Kal can recognize you!" Etain threatened. Darman was kind of shocked; after all, she is a Jedi. But then, considering the events today, she probably wouldn't be in her right state of mind.

Darman got up and helped Etain up on her feet.

"Well Et'ika, I hope that-"He stopped when he finally registered one part of Etain's speech that gave his mind a whirlwind spiral going

down.

A SON!?!

"A S-Son?!" Darman Spluttered. Etain nodded with a rather bright smile on her face, with Kal simply giving a grin. Darman then hugged his wife. Truly this night of an emotional roller coaster was a draining on a man such as Darman, but unfortunately, it was far from done.

"Well if this drama is over, I think we should move on to more pressing concerns."

Etain and Darman were calmer now, and held hands as they began to take a seat in one of the couches in the living room, with Kal seated opposite the couple.

"Well, the first thing we should do is inform your brothers about it." Darman found some fault with that but Kal continued, his eyes locked on Darman's.

"I understand your concern, adiik, but we need to have your brothers' supporting you if this really is going to happen soon. I don't know how far high this goes, but we need more people on our side if this Sith-shit hits the fan." Darman was wary, but after years of combat alongside his brothers, he decided to give them the benefit of the doubt.

"Alright, but make sure all of them are in the same place. I want to make sure that I want ALL of them to be there." Darman said. Kal understood, Darman's bond with Etain was strong, but his bonds with his brothers go way back. If he was to trust them all, he would have to gather them all in one spot so that he can ascertain who was more loyal to the Clan. The Skirata Clan maybe full of Clones, but their training with Kal made them more independent from other clone companies.

Etain agreed. And before long, all three of them headed over to a room with Venku Skirata, child of Darman and Etain Tur-Mukan.

Darman had actual tears in his eyes. He was overwhelmed with happiness just holding his sleeping son in his arms. Looking at Etain, the family held each other close, while Kal was in the back, watching his family with content.

He then sighed and moved out of the room, to leave the family in their peace. He came across the balcony and looked over the horizon, to the Senate building. His face hardened when he did.

Someone was pulling strings over the galaxy, with his sons being part of the puppet show. He knew that whoever made that order wanted the Jedi to be weak enough to be wiped out without any resistance. These Clone Wars are nothing more than someone trying to tie a noose around the neck of the Jedi, with the hardships and sacrifices the Order has faced, they may be digging their own grave, and could take Etain with them.

Kal Skirata was going to protect his family at all costs. And he knew just the people to help him. Etain may not have known who sent that data, but he knew of a faction that did possess the means to do so.

If he was to save Clan Skirata, he may need to barter with the most unpredictable race of Humans in the galaxy, the one unknown factor in this entire War.

The Terrans.

Well, now, this is a shocker. The next chapter will deal with Kal and Darman confronting the rest of Clan Skirata and Lt. Joseph Roberts is about to make a deal with Kal, while contacting a general to bring in reinforcements.

The Mando'a language part was hard, and I have to give thanks to Patriot-112 for giving me directions for the translators.

Also, if you think this went too sappy, give me a break. My computer is unfortunately close to the TV, which means if my step-sister were to watch her soap dramas, I'd be in close proximity. So in part, that is where I got some inspiration. God help me for doing so.

Now for going back to the presentâ€|

The Wounds that Heal

{Glinn's Field, Psych Counsel Room A, 2 hours after arrival, Present day.}

Dr. Glenda Schofield was a modest individual, with a rather pretty pink bowtie and a small keychain teddy bear on her uniform. She was had blue eyes with raven black hair and was wearing pink glasses as well. She also wore a pink shirt underneath a white lab coat. She was also a scientist in the field of xenobiology. So coupled with her psychiatry degree and her masters in science, she was the perfect candidate for treating the Jedi who suffered severe mental trauma. There were others, sure, but none had her expertise.

She was very excited, as this was her first time to treat aliens, Aliens, who have had severe mental trauma. She has treated patients before, but all of them were humans, and she understood human behavior, but treating humans and aliens at the same time was a first for her, and she loved challenges.

But deep down, she was a bit nervous. Who's to say that aliens think similar to humans?

A knock on the door signified the arrival of her first patient. Composing herself, she allowed the person to come in.

It was a Torgrutan, with blue and white striped head tails, or lekku, and some of the same color patterns surrounding her eyes. She looked as though she is in her 30s and was wearing a rather modest set of robes. The one thing that stood out of her appearance is her lightsaber.

Glenda wasted no time in introducing herself. "Dr. Glenda Schofield, at your service, Master-?"

"Master Shaak Ti, and it is an honor to be here, Doctor Schofield." Shaak Ti bowed her head slightly. Glenda blushed a bit at the "honor" part.

"Please, call me Glenda. I must say, this feels rather new to me, treating someone of your caliber for traumatic stress." Glenda admitted.

"Yes, even this is new. I must confess; I did not like this idea until Admiral Morrison came to me in person and talked to me about this. The recent events have taken a toll on me. So I accepted."

Glenda decided to cut straight to it.

Glenda nodded with her face neutral. "I have to say, I have read on your reports. You have done well in the Clone Wars without any significant trauma. But you've started to show some cracks, I believe?" Shaak Ti nodded.

"The loss of the Temple, and by extension, the Republic, to the enemy had cut me deep. I did what I could, but the haunting screams of younglings being shot-" Shaak Ti stopped as though reliving it could send her to a more moody state. Despite witnessing horrors in the War, the screams of such horror echoing within the Temple, her own home was painful to all who witnessed it.

Glenda had to push on however. "Master Ti, I know this is difficult and I can barely understand what tragedies have pushed you on edge, but try and continue recounting such events, because I know for a fact that burying them will only haunt you later, and it may prove debilitating, especially of someone of your status."

Shaak Ti recovered and began to recount the tale, in full. The discovery of Order 66, her wariness and tension she felt when commanding clones in light of the discovery, the attack on the temple and the loss of their only home. But the one thing that stuck her hardest was this simple fact: The galaxy has lost hope in the Jedi.

Since the Clone Wars, the Jedi have led numerous campaigns against the Separatists, and in the majority of such battles, many innocent lives were caught in the crossfire. Some blamed the Separatists, but most others blamed the Jedi, for they were supposed to keep them safe, to be peacekeepers, and to be champions of righteousness and justice. All of those titles went with the wind with the Clone Wars.

Glenda patiently listened to her recount the tale, and when she was done, Glenda had a sympathetic gaze on Shaak Ti.

"Listen, Master Ti. War is the ultimate life-changer; we Terrans are no strangers to that. We have learned to kill each other in ways that you could not have thought is possible, yet at the same time, we can also find strength and endurance and kindness in ways most people do not expect. We know that even if your home burns, do you think you should live your life in regret for a "what if?" No, home is not where you put your head on the ground for the night, it is the people who lived in it, and I believe most of you made it out. So moping helps no one. If you want to feel better, then learn to let go." Glenda advised.

Shaak Ti's mood was still somber, but a small smile on her face

indicated progress. "I can see now why Morrison recommended us to you, Dr Scho- I mean Glenda. You are very good at helping people like us come to terms with loss."

Glenda smiled back "Thanks, but this is not an overnight thing to cure. This will take months, or even years for you to get over this, but I will be there every step of the way." She took Shaak Ti's hand and squeezed it reassuringly. Shaak Ti squeezed it back.

"Thank you." She said. And Glenda began to help out Master Shaak Ti for the rest of the day. She would see her next patient tomorrow anyway.

Glenda smiled inwardly. _This may not be as difficult as I thought. Who would have guessed that even from other species, they harbor the same doubts and insecurities as any other human? This may prove very enlightening indeed._

What do you think? That's right, there will be some small snippets as to how the Jedi cope with the new surroundings in the UNSC, from religion to culture, we go deep with the Jedi as they begin a new life in the UNSC. So, while we delve in the past of how certain characters who had close encounters with the UNSC, we sometimes come back to find out just how complex the Terrans are in the eyes of certain Jedi, as they learn to adapt to a brand new life within the TUG.

Oh and if anyone is confused as to what the other languages are, google Mandalorian Translator in Google to find out.

Reply and Review.

3. Episode 3

Well, I finally got this one rolling. This chapter will mostly focus on the past but will also introduce Lost Legion to the Andromeda. If you know Crisis 3, you are in for a treat.

Episode 3: Mhi Solus Dar'tome

{Coruscant, 7 months ago, 2 days after the Jedi representatives meet Lt. Roberts. The Past}

Omega squad, the Null Clones and some old friends of the Skirata clan were gathered in a small part of the Barracks that served as the home of most of the clones stationed in Coruscant. Kal and Darman insisted that this meeting had to be taken as soon as things quiet down for them to gather in one place.

The day after that confrontation, Darman and Etain mended the bridge and became even closer together. After finding out about his son, Darman spent every waking moment of his shore leave to be with his wife and son. They married a few weeks ago, with Omega present, but the others were away.

Now, with the Nulls returning from a mission in the outer rim, Kal and Darman can finally gather the clan in one place to talk about their next move.

Many in the group were shocked that the Terrans found out about Order 66. They were trained extensively with orders being placed in their heads to subconsciously coax the clones into following it, regardless if they knew or not.

Of course, after the initial shock, all in the group began to bombard the duo with questions, ranging from who found out about it, to how did the Jedi know about it.

Kal and Darman had their answer the day a month ago when Etain came back from the Temple. The Terrans.

She told them that after Obi-Wan showed the information to the Council, they received a message requesting the Jedi to meet at remote coordinates within 3 to 4 days. Many of the Jedi Council believed it was the Terrans as there was no way any being can get to those coordinates without getting lost.

Many asked as to how the Terrans found out. Even with his knowledge on the UNSC and TUG, Kal Skirata was also in the dark as to how in the galaxy did a forceless race of humans find this out when even the Jedi could not.

After that was settled, Kal told them his entire plan to save the clan: Defect to the UNSC.

Of course, they were a bit, angry.

"Are you MAD?" Darman yelled.

"Did you really say what I think you've said, Kal'buir?" Fi asked.

"Have you gone senile?" Corr asked. Kal responded to the third person by whacking him in the head with a nearby metal pipe.

"SILENCE! ALL OF YOU! And call me senile again Corr and you will end up getting worse than a bruise, you di'kut!"

That shut up all of them. The Commandoes were getting twitchy and the Nulls simply kept silent, but still some tension was emanating from them. Kal understood. They knew little about the UNSC since their arrival in the galactic stage, and years of fighting have given them some sense of paranoia, but if this plan to save his family was going to work, he'd have to bargain with them to save his loved ones.

Kal took a deep breath before addressing them all.

"Okay, I understand your concerns, believe me, I'm having those concerns myself. However, this is not the time to be picky. I have looked over alternate means to do this, but Etain won't just drop out on the Jedi, not when this Order 66 is going to wipe them all out. And I know for a fact that Death Watch is still controls Mandalore, with Pre Visla still running around the place. But I know for a fact that these Terrans have possibly saved the Jetii by the simply informing them about it. I also know that their military strength is enough to go toe to toe with the Republic AND Seperatist armies. "Kal began to walk towards the group.

"These Terrans are crafty, yet strong. I believe that if this clan is

to survive whoever planned 66 are to go to the Terrans to root that bastard out of the Senate." Kal finished.

Ordo, one of the Null troopers, piqued up. "Why not just head to Mandalore? I know that Death Watch controls the planet, but surely we can hide in that secret compound you have there in Kyrimorut?"

Kal nodded. "Good point, but I think that's taking a very rash risk. I know that you'd turn to Mandalore before you'd turn to the Terrans, but I've considered that option. Death Watch is still watching the skies closely. We'd be spotted and that I've recently received word that Death Watch patrols the remote areas of Mandalore constantly."

Ordo did not look happy, but kept any discontent to himself. Darman decided to speak up, seeing as though none of his brothers had any more arguments.

"So what are we going to do?" Kal looked at him.

"For now we have to remain obedient to the Republic for now. I'm going to have to make a bargain to the UNSC myself. They know me, and I know one man who has the pull to save this clan."

Darman also brought up one thing "What about the Cuy'val Dar?" The Cuy'val Dar was responsible for the training of the clone troopers under the summons of Jango Fett, the bounty hunter whose template was used to clone the Republic's army. Many of them still cared about the clones who trained under them.

"I've informed them and so far, they all accepted my plan. Now I'm waiting for you to trust it too."

The group had no more objections, and moved on to plan for their survival.

* * *

><p>{Worth, Fort Ragno, 2 days later.}<p>

Lt. Joseph Roberts finally got some sleep.

After pulling multiple all nighters, he was finally rewarded with the intel on Palpatine. And though he was far from done, things have slowed down to a point that he can finally relax. He recently woke up, and took some coffee to shake the post-sleep inertia that he felt. His AI, Friday, was giving him the schedule.

"Well, at 10, you have a meeting with General Chernof, at 1; you will need to look over some exit strategies for the Jedi when they leave Coruscant, and at- wait." Friday said suddenly. Roberts now had put his full attention to whatever has Fridays'.

"I have an incoming transmission. Says the ID is from Kal Skirata, do you know him, sir?" Roberts was now interested. He had first met Skirata when he interviewed him in an undisclosed location for the information on the Clone army. Roberts could tell that Kal treated the clones as more than expendable warriors, they were family to him. Of course, Kal did not say it out right, but Roberts saw that in every time he was asked to describe the clones, his tone, the choice

words, and the body movement indicated that he held the Clones he trained in high regard. For him to contact the UNSC, Roberts in specific, and means that he wants a favor.

Lt. Roberts wasted no time "Patch him through." He had a hologram table nearby and walked over to plug Friday in it. The UNSC logo that had been lazily rotating was replaced with the face of a 50 year old human male, with Grey hair and some wrinkles near the eyes.

"Kal Skirata, never thought I'd see you again." The CBMI agent greeted Kal.

"Lt. Roberts, I remember you. I seem to recall that you were a part of that group that interviewed the Kamino trainers, with me included." Kal said.

"Yes, it has been a while now, hasn't it?" Robert replied. "But I trust you're not calling for an inquiry of my wellbeing, now is it?" Roberts asked.

Kal's face grew moody "No, it ain't. I received word that someone leaked Order 66 in the Jedi Order, and that you're people are responsible. Is that true?" Kal asked.

Roberts kept a neutral face. "What is it to you?" Secretly, Roberts knew why he asked that.

"My sons are in the Clone Army, but I will not see them turn on the Jedi. Call me concerned, but I won't allow them to get killed over the Jedi they've fought with for 3 years. I know most of them are good people, and I want to keep my boys out of the crossfire."

Roberts then decided to show his hand. "Is that all?"

Kal grimaced. "What are you talking about?"

Roberts smiled deviously "Are you sure this is about them, or about RC-1136 and Jedi Knight Etain Tur-Mukan, who your boy is obviously head over heels for?" Kal was at a loss for words.

_How did he know?! _Kal was wide-eyed. Roberts kept looking on in silent amusement for 3 seconds before Kal regained his composure.

Roberts decided to speak up first. "Oh come now, Skirata? We were able to find out about Palpatine's endgame and did you really think we'd not turn a blind eye to the War? In our experience, knowing is only half the battle. This war is a fire, Kal, and it can spread to us as easily as it can burn. And we now know there are those emotions run high in such conflicts. In fact, one might say that it is easier to find a kindred spirit in war than in peace. Besides, she isn't the first."

Even though the man's knowledge in Etain and Darman's relationship was unsettling, he found the idea that Etain was not the first to break the code was slightly amusing to him at least. To think that Jedi in the same hot seat as them was like saying that a family is in a same transport system, yet disguise themselves to hide from suspicion from the same authorities, even if they are not truthful to

each other.

Kal spoke up. "So you were spying on the Republic?"

Roberts then paused for a moment. The next act he would do will go against everything in his CBMI training, but if this gamble paid off, he would have a powerful ally ready to strike the enemy from within.

Roberts shook his head. "Not just the Republic." Roberts then told him everything, from his reports to Mina Bonterri. He even told him about Palpatine's true nature.

"A Sith Lord? Fierfek, this explains everything. But what it does not explain is why are you telling me all this? Sure, you could tell me some snippets of info to keep me interested, but to tell me of everything you've uncovered to me, well, let's just say that I know that when people put me in a loop, they'll want something in return."

Roberts nodded. "Indeed. I have weighed the risks, and decided to tell you straight because I have an opportunity to really slow down the Republic in the event it turns us and by extension, the Jedi. But to do that, I need agents on the inside that I can trust."

Kal understood. He was going to have to make a deal with him in order for his clan to survive.

Roberts was curious, however. "I understand that you have many contacts and hideouts over the years. Why not just take them there instead of contacting me?"

"Because I want to keep it as a last resort, and none of the safe houses I have throughout this galaxy are too small for my extended family to live in. The only safe place that is large enough for my family is a large complex in Mandalore. Sadly, the political climate there means that if I ever return there, the only thing greeting me is blaster fire." Kal replied.

"Yes, I have heard that Pre Visla took over Mandalore after overthrowing Duchess Satine in a coup." Roberts said. Kal nodded sadly.

"Yeah, but it ain't all bad news. According to some sources inside Mandalore, a small group of "True Mandalorians" broke her out and they are now conducting guerilla warfare on the countryside." Kal replied. "Unfortunately, that's all I got."

Roberts, being in the CBMI, however, knew much more than that. "Well, Skirata, that was old news. According to OUR sources, there is now a great shift in power within the Death Watch. They say that a Zabrak with black and red tattoos now ruling over Mandalore, with the Death Watch now split in half, and in a state of civil war, dragging Mandalore with them."

To Kal, that was news for him. If this was true, then chances are that going to his compound may be even riskier than before. Sure, Death Watch is too distracted with its own civil war, but if a Sith is involved, then this would be bad for Mandalore. He may have a family outside Mandalore, but it was his home, and no Mandalorian

leaves his home to animals, especially ones that wield the force with impunity. So if he is to save his family AND his planet, he will have to make his deal a good one.

"I have an offer: I will give information on a secret Republic base that even the Jedi don't know AND offer our services for you in exchange for two things. First is that you ensure asylum for my clan, and second, is that you can help me retake Mandalore from whatever monster rules over there." Kal hoped that his deal was good enough.

Roberts had to admit, it was a semi-good deal. The former is pretty weak, considering that if he is to save the Jedi, he would need allies, and if there are sympathizers for them, he would need their help in securing Jedi outside UNSC space if they were not able to get them out in time, but the latter seems rather interesting. If he is to actually agree in retaking Mandalore, it would not only increase UNSC space, he would have gained an ally able to help the UNSC maintain a good grip in the Andromeda.

"I have to say Kal that first deal is kind of weak, considering that we need allies in the first place and your asylum idea is null and void, because any ally of the Jedi is an ally the UNSC can accept and use in finding other Jedi."

Mentally, Kal face-palmed. He was so sure that the Terrans would not accept rogue clones that he did not acknowledge the fact that since Etain is a Jedi, she could get help from the UNSC and in turn could get his extended family asylum since that any person capable of helping the Jedi could be accepted.

"Well, you can forgive me for not thinking about that sooner; since I was convinced you have a no clone's allowed policy on your planets."

Roberts chuckled. "If your clones don't think like droids AND help us out at the same time, then I say it's a win in my book any day."

Kal then went on to the next deal "What about my second one?"

Roberts tapped his chin in thought and began to think about it; at least, that's what Kal sees. In actuality, he has already begun to formulate a plan to bring Mandalore into the UNSC. And Kal's offer to hunt for secret Republic bases actually is a sound, if there are blank spots in the Republic's data points that the CBMI AI has not found.

"Alright, then, I believe that your offer to seek Republic research bases can be rewarded with some promise. If you can give us something of extremely high value, then Mandalore can be retaken, if you can give me something of high value in return."

Kal was elated, but knew that this was a rather monumental task. He would have to use every contact, both in the Republic and underworld, to find such a base, but if this could save Mandalore, he would have to take some chances to grab it.

"I also have one more request." Roberts looked on intently at Kal.

"I want a cure to stop my sons' accelerated aging process." Kal said. Roberts was not surprised. He knew that the Clones were bred to grow faster than the normal person and he knew that it worked both ways. So he will have to ask some favors over at the Pegasi Institute at New Harmony to help him out.

"I think we can get that one covered. Is that all?"

"Yeah, I will make plans. I will contact you soon." And with that Kal disconnected the link.

Roberts had no doubt in his ability to find something of value, but he DID doubt his ability to obtain it. He would need a much more appropriate force to retrieve the data for him, and this is not meant for STARU, ODST or even Trinity to do this mission. He would need the UNSC's most elite in this. He would need a group who survived Doisac and kept many insurrectionists from rising from the ashes. He would need a battalion of battle-hardened0 Spartan IVs, who knew when to be loud and when to be stealthy.

He would need Lost Legion. And he knew just the man to call them in.

* * *

><p>{Naboo, 1 week later}<p>

General David Escandor was in the Theed Terran embassy and was looking at a holo of Lt. Joseph Roberts standing in front of him. Though he was put there to officially secure relations of Naboo to the TUG, Unofficially, he was also one of the only people in the UNSC to call in Spartans. With the discovery of Order 66, Sydney's being tense on the whole issue, deciding whether or not to send in more Spartans aside from Trinity. He had already received numerous requests from CBMI to send in more Spartan teams but David refused. He had 2 reasons why he did not bring in any more Spartan teams.

First, this war, while it poses a threat to the Andromeda colonies, was none of their concern. Spartans are mainly used to put down any Insurrections and Covenant loyalist remnants in the Milky Way, and any threat in the Andromeda was coming from people who think that they can double cross the UNSC, a problem easily rectified by STARU. Second, his brother said that unless there was an actual threat coming, he and his Spartan IV battalion would be busy trying to live their lives in peace, since, besides the surge of sudden Insurrection, he and his Spartans would be busy trying to be people. He wanted his men and women under his command to be people, especially since Spartan II Red Team was assigned to them.

Lost Legion was a group of Spartan IVs who outlived their previous team members and banded together under Lance. They first met during a battle at a Brute space station, and after a series of skirmishes, became an official member of the UNSC as a battalion of Spartans. Their defining moment was at the battle of Doisac, where they helped win multiple planetside battles and their Commander was responsible for uncovering the Brutes' plan to self-detonate their planet, calling in the order to retreat. Since then they participated in multiple skirmishes against minor Insurrections and Brute remnants in

the Milky Way. Recently, things slowed down for them to take a break and let the newer Spartans deal with them, with Lance requesting their presence to be called only in times of war. Normally, this request would not sit well with High Command, but his brother was part of that chain.

David was supportive of this move and pulled some strings. He had to admit, that when Spartan II Red Team was assigned to Spartan IV Lost Legion Battalion, they was concern that they would not get along. But now, because of the hard, supportive efforts of the Spartans in Lost Legion, the Spartans IIs are actually able to integrate successfully with the Spartans and even society, since Spartans are now commonplace in every UNSC planet and are regarded as heroes. Since then, Lost Legion has been regarded not only as the heroes of Doisac, but also known as the model Spartans that can be experts in combat and integrate successfully with society. High Command recently acknowledged this, and has let them be for now.

Right now, he was dealing with Lt. Roberts, who is again requesting for Lost Legion to the Andromeda. He's dealt with Roberts before, and that was during the beginning of the war. Since then, he's learned to make do with what he's got. So if Roberts was asking for Lost Legion now, it must be serious. He was told of the deal involving Skirata and the Jedi, and David was intrigued. To get two allies in one sweep was impressive.

"I have to say, Joseph, you've outdone yourself. I have to wonder just how long you people decide to use them before you throw them away." Roberts was rather shocked.

"Beg your pardon, but what are you implying?" David looked at the CBMI in the eye with a hard stare.

'Don't give me that crap. I know for a fact that CBMI is a successor to ONI, and I know your types: backstabbing, self-serving and condescending in nature. Think I'm wrong? Ask Cad Bane how he's doing right now, oh wait! He's dead, and as much as I hate the bastard, I think this is a prelude to what you'd do to the Jedi and the rogue Clones."

Roberts was mad. His job was tough enough without being compared to by his former predecessor. He hated ONI, in fact. The whole reason he joined CBMI is to serve the original purpose of ONI, while adding a bit of altruism in the mix. In fact, all members in the CBMI, although use shady methods, are good people, ready to protect the UNSC and gain allies instead of using people as pawns and backstabbing everyone as they go.

"With all due respect, General, don't you compare me to those bastards. We may have the same methods, but at least we don't destroy lives en masse. We are also working to gain allies for the UNSC, and the TUG as well, so don't you dare say that we'd dump them to the street like ONI would do, because we are not ONI. ONI was more concerned with holding grudges more than doing its job."

David nodded. "Fair enough. I want to make that clear before we move on." He then stood up and began to pace in the room.

"I have thought this through, and while I must admit, you are doing better than ONI, I still can't authorize the Spartan request." Roberts

opened his mouth to argue, but David held up a hand to signify that he was not done yet.

"Now, before you start, hear me out. You see, while High Command sees the threat looming from Palpatine, they made it very clear to me that should the UNSC be in a state of conflict against the Republic, then I cannot send any Spartans to Andromeda, aside from the ones here presently."

Roberts calmed down a bit. "Alright, but you have to understand. I am making a deal with warriors, not soldiers. I read up on the Mandalorians, and the thing about these guys is that they always let their actions be their words and first impressions may give him the sense that we may be weaker than they are."

David grunted. "True, I know that type all too well, and you think they'd trust us more if the Spartans are involved."

The CBMI agent nodded.

"Nevertheless, the order still stands, I'm sorry Lieutenant." Joseph threw his hands in frustration.

"Damnit Escandor, I can't use STARU or ODST units for this, they're too professional and whatever I have planned needs more than simple human intervention for what I have planned! Unless something comes out earlier, 2 months will take too long and I'll lose people to the wind." Joseph now began to pace furiously.

David smiled, however. "You must know that Project Shadowspear has reached completion."

Joseph stopped in his tracks. "You mean-"The general nodded.

"That's right; we finally created a slipspace device capable of instantaneous transport. There was a lot of trial and error involved, but, "the general then walked over to a terminal to activate the holographic console and a small UNSC Frigate beginning to display to the two men.

"It was worth it. This baby is the first and after it undergoes its first mission, the UNSC can finally mass produce it on its newest ships and retrofit the existing ones. Unfortunately,-"David purposely left it unfinished, and allowed Roberts to continue.

"There are no first missions." He finished his tone basically oozing excitement.

"This is not just any old Slipspace drive. Although the Infinity has such engines, it could not be replicated on a small scale, until now. And this is for first responders that can't wait for an Infinity class ship to tow along, or for any classified Black Ops missions that require speed and stealth in equal amounts."

Roberts was ecstatic. Before, he first learned of Project Shadowspear and thought it was a breakthrough, but it was mostly trial and error, and the concept never got out of the drawing board. To think that it was completed now!

It seems as though the fates were smiling on Roberts on this day.

Now, all he had to do was wait, and continue on other projects before continuing on this one. He then moved on to other matters until he was called to attend other matters.

"Thank you sir. I will take my leave now." Lt. Roberts gave a crisp salute, to which the general acknowledged with his own, and left.

David stood up when he left, and went over to the balcony overlooking Theed, and smiled deviously despite himself.

"This is going to get very interesting indeed. Well, brother, I honestly feel sorry to anyone stupid enough to get in your way." He said to no one in particular.

* * *

><p>{Etain's Apartment, Coruscant, 1 week after the end of the war, 3 days before the declaration of war on the UNSC}<p>

Many in the clone army celebrated the end of the long war that has grounded the Republic. And many took to drinking, gambling and cheering out in the courtyard. While the mood was festive outside, a certain clan was preparing the final plans to leave the Republic.

The Skirata clan had a tumultuous 7 months. Juggling their loyalty to the GAR while trying to find a way to sell them out was a tough job gave them all a sour taste in their mouth. They have always been loyal members and the fact is that they did not want to push through with this, but with Darman romantically entwined with Etain, a Jedi, it was decided for the good of all the Skirata members by leaving the GAR to go to the UNSC.

After seven months, Kal found the one he was looking for: A secret Republic weapons testing facility located in a remote island in the planet of Kashyyyk. Far away from the frontlines, yet suspicious enough to warrant Kal's attention, it was the perfect place to find anything the "Chancellor" wanted hidden from the Jedi.

Kal talked with everyone and it was decided: Omega Squad would take the Terrans and help out in whatever they needed, Ordo and the Nulls are to take anything that would lead back to the Skirata clan and hide their tracks, and search for a way to still stop aging process that would kill the clones as they age rapidly, with Besany and Zilka, and Etain would stay in Coruscant to create misleading orders to confuse High Command in the GAR in the event that they find the Skirata clan missing. It was also because Etain could not leave the Jedi to their fate and her son.

The Skirata clan, except for Darman and Kal, were shocked upon finding out that Darman had a son, but quickly congratulated (and teased) Darman's new family. Now they were hoping to survive the coming storm. Nyreen Vollen was tasked with helping the Nulls and Venku escape as soon as any trouble starts in Coruscant.

Walon Vau himself has also come to help, with Marik Mereel-Orar in tow. They would serve as their "backup" in case things go south.

Before they left the next day, Darman and Etain were together for that night in their apartment. Their little child slept soundly in the room next to theirs, as they held each other tenderly and dearly.

"Chaabar." Etain said one word low enough for her companion to hear. It meant "afraid" and clearly could see why.

"Don't be, I won't let anything happen to you or Kad'iika." Darman promised. He breathed in the scent of her hair and kissed her on the forehead to reassure her.

"I am scared of you not coming back." She turned to face him, her eyes teary.

Darman brought her up, and put his hand on her chin slightly so he can raise her head and face him.

"I know that it's dangerous, and I understand this will kill me, but I'm worried for you too. Staying here is dangerous now. With the war over, Palpatine might activate that order at anytime, and we still have no clue as to which Clone turns or which clone stays loyal, so don't give me all the weight."

Etain laughed softly. "I guess we're both heading for the fire." She held him close.

Darman decided that if this is their last night together, he would finally make it official.

"Etain, I think now is the time we make it official."

Etain was confused when he meant about that, but when he placed both his hands on hers, she finally understood.

"Y-You mean-?" Etain spluttered. Darman nodded. "This won't be an official ceremony, seeing as the only thing that's covering us is a blanket, but I think this is the best time to do it."

Etain nodded in absolute glee and Darman instructed her to repeat what he says. They both closed their eyes and began to say the words that would bound them for life to each other.

Mhi Solus Tome

Mhi Solus Dha'Tome

Mhi Me'dinui An

Mhi Ba'juri Verde

After that, Etain and Darman opened their eyes and felt more connected somehow. Darman cupped his new wife's face and kissed, with her arms around his neck. The kiss was gentle, and they held it for a few moments before stopping. They did not say anything, for fear of ruining the moment together. They embraced and lied down on their bed.

Darman said one thing before they both fell to slumber: "Ni kar'tayli gar, Cyar'ika."

They then fell asleep, hoping that this night would be their new beginning, if the trials ahead will not end either them or their family.

The next day, Etain woke up, but Darman was missing. She stayed in bed a bit longer, enjoying the warmth of the part of the bed where he slept on.

* * *

><p>{Theed, Naboo, 24 hours before the attack on the UNSC embassy in Coruscant}<p>

General Escandor was now typing on a terminal, on it, the text is:

United Nation Space Command Data Base, Request Form for Lost Legion

** Access File on Spartan IV Battalion Lost Legion and Experimental Test Weaponry and Equipment**

**Accessingâ€| Please enter security clearance code**

**Entering code**

**Access Granted, Welcome General David Escandor**

**Browsing UNSC top tier files**

**File 000-A selected**

** Request Information Transfer**

**Acknowledged- Access Granted**

**Beginning Information send out**

File- 000-A: Spartan Transfer Request.

Encryption code: 6857-3982-28510

URGENT â€" PRIORITY OMEGA - URGENT

CLASSIFICATION: TOP SECRET EYES ONLY

Location: Theed, Naboo, Andromeda Galaxy.

Sent to: Sydney, Australia, UNSC High Command

WARNING: MOST EQUIPMENT STATED IS HYBRID FORERUNNER-HUMAN TECHNOLOGIES. ENEMY MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO ACCESS EQUIPMENT. ALL TECHNOLOGIES ARE OUTFITTED WITH DEADMAN SWITCHES. REMOTE DETONATORS WILL BE WITH COMMANDER ESCANDOR, LIEUTENANT ROBERT, OR ADMIRAL MORRISON.

CBMI Information: Lt. Joseph Roberts of the CBMI has requested for additional Spartan Reinforcements. Granted by General David Escandor, Spartan IV Battalion Lost Legion has been granted go ahead and will

use the new "Shadowspear" Slip Space drive to send the first two Fireteams in to comply with Roberts' request. Other objectives are to:

To assist Fireteam Trinity and provide support for any and all allies of the UNSC/Sangheili joint venture.

To uncover evidence of Forerunner tech and information on the Andromeda

To test bed multiple experimental equipment that is to be used by future UNSC/CBMI forces

Led by Commander Lance Escandor, Callsign "Overlord"

FOR AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL: Using the experimental "Shadowspear" Slip space drive, UNSC Frigate Dark Suffering has been authorized to deploy directly to Kashyyyk under Lt. Joseph Roberts. Command of Fireteam Outlaw and Crimson are under Lt. Roberts, unless Admiral Morrison overrules command.

Top Spartan Equipment to be used in the field is as follows: (NOTE: List will be updated as new equipment gets shipped in from the Milky Way)

The Mjolnir Mark X Powered assault armor.

In addition to the slightly enhanced armor and shielding tech of the Mjolnir Mark X, its real capability is in its slipspace teleportation device. Recovered and reverse-engineered from the shield world of Requiem, this device finally is the feature that Catherine Halsey herself wanted to incorporate: Portable Slipspace tech. This allows the user to literally teleport anywhere within a 5 mile radius at anytime. The limitations, however is that it roughly takes 4 charges before charging up for 3 minutes. It is also durable enough to withstand atmospheric reentry. Best feature of all is that it can even passively upgrade itself when not in use. It has incorporated nano technology to keep enhancing the armor, adding weapons to itself, upgrading armor durability, even adding new tech if need be, the Mark X is the epitome of human ingenuity. Sure the previous versions had such nano tech, but the nanotech is more advanced than the previous versions, as it literally changes the armor depending on the battle condition, in addition to repairing any damage done on it. It was the ultimate battle statement.

Has an inbuilt cloak for stealth operations.

The inbuilt AI compartment is large enough to contain two AI at the same time, but scientists claim that using that feature is risky as it is generally difficult to maintain two AI at the same time.

Active AI Protocols on the suit also means that the AI in a Spartan's suit no longer needs to leave the suit itself to interface with any terminal. This means that the AI will no longer be compromised in an event an AI is needed to access terminals or data ports.

Because of its recent completion, only 15 of these suits are available.

It is also able to compress itself to non-existence. Meaning that Spartans no longer need to visit the armory to suit up, so it saves up on the time needed to prepare on any combat operation. The only visible thing that signifies its existence is the TACPAD on their wrists.

The only downside: It costs more than 5 Vampire fighters, making it easily the most expensive Spartan armor to be produced, and only available through CBMI and UNSC Top Tier Spartan Teams, as they always want to be ahead of the pack.

Z-T 956 Hardlight Composite Bow.

NOTE: This weapon was created under the request of Fireteam Crimson.

Combining the best of Hardlight tech gathered from Requiem and tried and true mechanics of the bow and arrow, this human hunting device has now become a Spartan Hunter's dream toy. Utilizing hardlight as the string and light titanium frame, the power, stability and speed of any arrow launched from this weapon is comparable to the Railgun's own stats. The only downside is that it is extremely heavy, meaning only Spartans can use this silent killer of a weapon.

This weapon was introduced in concept by then Lt. Commander Lance to develop a weapon that is not only silent, but also lethal and creates a statement that Spartans are Hunters as well. R&D managed to complete this experimental weapon 48 hours ago, so testing the field use is now up to Crimson.

The Arrows themselves are a mix of hardlight and titanium engineering, and can be modified for stun, sonic, explosive, corrosive, binary, and EMP.

MA8D Individual Combat Weapon System

Throughout the years, the ICWS is the most used weapon in all of the UNSC, popular due to its rate of fire, resiliency in any combat condition, and good with medium to close range combat.

However, with the onset of the Clone Wars, the UNSC realized that some enemies might be more resilient than most to take down with simple 7.62 NATO rounds. Utilizing some experimental tech over at the CBMI and UNSC Spec Op branches, the weapon now received an upgrade. Keeping its original design, the MA8D Assault Rifle has improved as ammunition used are more diverse. Aside from the tried and true 7.62 NATO round, the eggheads in the R&D have also created a new round type: Hardlight Rounds, with the ability to pierce armor and disintegrate the enemy, leaving absolutely no trace that he/she ever existed. Aside from the added bonus of bypassing enemy shields and armor due to increased kinetic launchers installed, the weapon can also be modified, from suppressors to railgun attachments, from EMP generators, to Hologram deployers. Even the Ammunition counters can be changed to fit the custom designs of the owner, incendiary, explosive, electronical, etc. Because of the large caliber rounds on the gun, the normal 7.62 rounds held in the weapon are increased to 64, twice that of the old models, with a new ammo round type still in production to replace the 7.62 rounds normally used by this gun.

The weapon is still in the infancy, but if the weapon get s the

go-ahead, and then they will be a cut above the major military powers in the Andromeda.

Aside from these three, Lost Legion will also have an assortment of Covenant weaponry and Forerunner Weaponry in the Arsenal as well.

Lost Legion has three branches, two Fireteams in each. Hunter, Warrior, and Fortress Branches. Hunter are mainly fast strike Spartans that can end a firefight before it begins. Warrior is a more on frontal assaults more than fast strikes and defensive tactics. Fortress Spartans are more defensive in nature.

Every Spartan in Lost Legion has the capacity to do stealth, assault and defend tactics. The Branches are put in place to group Spartans in their most secure combat scenario.

Crimson and Outlaw have been assigned to Commander Escandor to assist Lt. Roberts. The rest of Lost Legion shall be attached to the UNSC Preston Cole until further notice.

****Fireteam Crimson: (Hunter Branch)****

Leader: Lheanna Solis, Callsign "Lady"

Medic/Hacker: Lawrence Yomomoto, Callsign "Wren"

Sniper: Soren Maven, Callsign "Maverick"

Heavy Weapons/Demolitions: Raul Mendoza, Callsign "Wrecker"

Pointman: Michael Turner, Callsign "Lightning"

****Fireteam Outlaw: (Warrior Branch)****

Leader: Chris Ryans, Callsign "Hot Rod"

Medic/Hacker: Joseph Tan, Callsign "Wizard"

Sniper: Kym Sara Canizares, Callsign "White"

Heavy Weapons/Demolitions: Mack Stancel, Callsign "Mac"

Pointman: Jake Madrigal, Callsign "Circus"

Note that most of these Spartans will use the Forerunner Weaponry.

Fireteams to Worth are expected to arrive in within 48 hours. Situation may deteriorate by then.

Sincerely,

General David Escandor, UNSC Defense Committee

****_Send Request form**_**

Authorization Code required****

**Authorization Code: 8503-5612-34591**

**Request Sent**

Now, all the General could hope is that Roberts was not wrong. The tides of war are coming fast.

Whew! That was the long one. I hope you enjoyed this as much as I did writing it. I decided to get to the marriage part with them (unofficially) considering that Darman loves Etain so much and wants to really make it official, regardless to whatever happens in the following days.

If anyone says that I did not do a good job with that UNSC letter, give me a better example and I might improve on it.

Now for the presentâ€¦

Eavesdropping Jedi. (**AU: This next scene is inspired by 117Jorn's Star Wars:we dared**)

{Glinn's field, Barracks A, 16 hours after landfall, The Present}

Tallisibeth Enwandung-Esterhazy, or Scout as her friends call her, woke up in a bunker with 10 other Padawans also doing the same. She looked around, and saw that the events yesterday was no dream, it was real. She then groggily got up and stretched before she went to the hallway leading to the Cafeterias. Ever since the ride going to Glinn's Field, she felt sad and miserable. She did feel shock and happiness when she learned that the Jedi has now changed their relationship policy and soon, many of them began to say "I love you" to someone in the Order, or in the UNSC, or even in the Clone Army. She thought it was kind of touching considering what has been lost.

She then felt very miserable again, because she had lost Whie. Whie Malreaux was a good friend to her and they have been through a lot, and along the way made friends with another Padawan, Drake Otto. The two of them have been inseperable since. She had harbored feelings for Whie more than she did for Drake, which stung. The Battle of Coruscant changed all that when Whie was gunned down whilst protecting her. She had been in a trauma since then. Drake helped her get her bearings and leave. Ever since, she leaned on him for support, and was grateful for that. But she was still miserable and had some tears on her eyes when she heard voices in a nearby room.

Feeling like she had nothing better to do she decided to take a peek inside. She saw Drake, but with a woman with long brown hair with red highlights in. She realized that she was looking at Etain Tur-Mukan, a woman who actually looks like her, but unlike her, she had a much more red color in her hair, and much younger. She trained to get closer without alerting them, but unknown to her, Etain had seen her sticking out the hallway, and she grinned inwardly.

Scout had crouched near the door, and the noises became more audible.

"So tell me, Drake, what are your feelings for Scout?"

Scout was shocked. Drake has feelings for her? She must have been hearing things, but the next words proved her wrong.

"U-uhm, what do you mean, Master?" Drake's voice stuttered.

"You know what I mean, Drake, and don't you dare leave this room unless you tell me. Believe me, I can do that." Etain's voice sternly said.

After some silence, Drake replied.

"Yes, alright, I like her, as in like, I like her a lot; in fact, I think I'm in love with her. There, you happy?"

Scout then turned as red as her hair, with her heart beating faster. _HE likes me? But why hasn't he told me about it. I like him too!_ Scout thought. She had always had feelings for Drake, but could not express them very openly for the Jedi Code forbids it.

"Good, acceptable." Etain then continued. "And you did not tell her about this?"

"No, because I could tell she liked Whie more. She saw me as more of a best friend to confide to, but I could tell, so I just let her be a friend, even though it hurt. She liked him, and I wanted her to be happy, so I kept my feelings to myself, sucked it up, and stayed silent."

And unknowingly, it hurt Scout too. She was close to Whie, yes, but she had always considered her a very good friend, or a brother she did not have, and she saw Drake as much more, but could not act her feelings for it. It pained her to know that she unknowingly and indirectly hurt him. She was close to him because he was more open, yet stern.

"So if you get the chance, you'd tell her?" Etain asked.

"It would feel cheap, and if I do, she'll go to me as a replacement for Whie, and I don't want that. I want her to love me as me, and not some replacement."

Scout had her head down in shame. She was so close to Whie that she did not acknowledge Drake's feelings for her, and it had hurt.

"Scout's not that type of girl, Drake. She is strong and independent, and also smart." Etain kept her face stern, but mentally grinned when she saw some red hair stick out of the opening.

"She may care, or she may not. Either way, you should tell her at the very least. And she's compassionate, more than she gives herself credit for. So go on, tell her what you feel."

Scout smiled a bit. That part was true.

"She's still grieving. I'm gonna give her space, and then we'll see." Drake assured, but Etain sounded none satisfied.

"Don't give me that." She snapped. "She deserves to hear it, and I

think she won't push her away like you think it will."

"Alright, I will, but I'm going to wait a while. She needs time. Don't worry Master, she'll know."

Fortunately for you Etain thought, _she already does, now to lift the curtainsâ€|_

Scout was still flushed, but she knew what needed to be done. She peeked and saw Master Etain look at her, and at that moment, she knew that Master Tur-Mukan saw her, and that she orchestrated the whole thing.

And now the ruse dropped.

"Well then!" Etain said in a rather loud voice. "I don't think you will need to wait a long time for that one." Scout knew now with certainty that she knew that Scout was outside, and was now calling her in.

"Why is that?" Then Etain had a rather unsettling smirk that made Drake nervous.

"W-What?"

"Why don't you talk to her now?" Then turned her head to the open doorway, and said in a rather loud voice. "Whaddya say, Scout?"

Drake Otto had been in many harrowing situations during the War, and still kept his cool, but Drake paled when he saw Scout come out, with her fiery red hair, and apparently red cheeks that was now on her face.

Etain smiled deviously, and silently backed away as Scout approached Drake with small steps.

"H-How m-much did you h-h-hear?" Drake stuttered. Scout, in a slightly audible tone, said "All of it." And Drake paled even more.

Scout closed the distance as she and Drake stared in each others' eyes. "Why didn't you tell me before?" Drake then lowered his head.

"Because I know that you like Whie before I did. I always did, but I wanted you to be happy, so I kept quiet. And after his death, I wanted to comfort you, but you might see me as some misguided replacement for Whie, so I kept my distance." Drake confessed.

Scout took a deep breath, contemplating what he had just said, and replied "Drake, no matter how hard you tried, no one can replace Whie." Drake then closed his eyes, and waited for the oncoming rejection from Scout.

She had different plans however.

"But," she said, closing the distance even further between them "I have always thought of him as a brother. Because there is someone else that I know who is closer than that." Drake opened his eyes in confusion.

"Who?"

Then Scout closed the distance and their eyes met.

"You, Drake." And in that instant, Scout rapidly closed the distance between her lips and Drake's. Although initially surprised, Drake accepted it and returned the kiss, closing his eyes, and brought her closer to deepen the intimate contact.

Etain smiled at the two. "Hope you kids do well in the future." And left to find Darman and Venku, leaving the new couple time to themselves.

* * *

><p>{Glinn's Field, 15 minutes later, Hallway b-15}<p>

Etain Tur-Mukan felt calm and happy. The most she had felt in months. After resolving that one, she began to walk towards the far side of the compound to find Darman. So far she had spied some Jedi admitting feelings to each other, or someone in the compound. She even saw Obi-Wan and Siri Tachi on one of the hallways leading to the flight deck. She thought they would kiss, but they simply hugged. She was fine as long as they truly feel happy for one another.

As she headed to the main hangar, she heard rather loud voices in a conference room nearby. She wondered if the voices there were another couple, so she decided to take a look. But upon closer inspection, that was not the case.

"So what do you think, Admiral?" A gruff male voice said.

"Officially, the UNSC will not participate in the the Cuy'val Dar's and the Rogue Clone Army's actions to retake Mandalore from Death Watch. Unofficially, Lost Legion is there to assist them as part of the deal." Morrison's voice boomed.

Etain suddenly hugged the wall, with her eyes widening with every syllable. They were talking about Kal's deal with the UNSC to retake Mandalore. She felt some satisfaction, knowing that the UNSC was going to keep their word.

"What about the aging process?" The earlier voice asked.

"The Kaminoan Ko Sai you recovered from the Kashyyyk Facility is a great help. She reckons that with our tech, she can finish it in about 2 days. The cure will be widespread."

"Good. I am a man of my word."

"That you are, Commander Escandor." Etain was pleased to know that Lance was going to help uphold his bargain and was about to leave until she heard more.

"One other thing," Morrison suddenly said. "The Janus Key has found something in the Andromeda, specifically in Mandalore." Etain's eyes widened. She then pressed her ear to the seal door and began to intently listen in.

"We've used a Forerunner Outpost nearest Harvest to ascertain what that thing is, but so far, the only information shown to us is that a Forerunner by the name of the Savant, is the Forerunner responsible for "experimenting" outside the Milky Way, or at least, according to text provided."Morrison claimed, to the shock of Etain.

Etain was now curious as to who the "Forerunners" are. Obviously, the UNSC has some interest in them, but the Jedi know next to nothing about them. She decided to listen closely for more info.

"So you think this outpost is somewhere in Mandalore?"Commander Escandor asked.

"Yes, the data maybe cryptic, but it is accurate."Morrison said. Etain had hairs standing on her skin. This was usually not a good sign.

"What of the Jedi? Will they be informed?"Etain was somewhat pleased that Lance had some consideration for the Jedi. Still her uneasiness did not leave her.

Admiral Morrison stayed silent for several moments before speaking up. "That is on your call, Lance. IF you think this will smoothen things over for us, do it. They are out allies, so let's have them look at our cards."Etain was concerned at this point. Hopefully, the Spartan Commander will enlighten her.

Which is fortunate, because unbeknownst to her, Lance's AI, Rei, told him that Etain was sneaking outside the room.

"Sooooo, Lance,"Rei began, a slight hint of sarcasm tinting her voice. "We gonna let her in now, or what?"She was using Lance's Tacpad to communicate without alerting her and still audible that only the Spartan Commander of Lost Legion could know.

"Give me a sec."Then turning his attention to Morrison, he said "If that's all Admiral, I think I can handle things from here."

"Very well, Morrison out."As soon as he logged out, Lance gave the signal to open the door, which Etain was leaning on and fell in the most embarrassing manner (aka she fell flat on her face, with a rather girlish "oof" from her).

"Well, that was rather amusing."Lance smirked. Etain quickly regained her bearings, but she had rather red cheeks, presumably since she was rather self aware of how embarrassing she sounded on her way down to the floor.

She turned to Lance and stood up despite that. "What are you planning? Commander Escandor. Are you planning to betray us?"Etain was blunt, Lance could respect that.

"No, nothing of that sort. This is something ancient, something old, a race that predates the galaxy and still shapes it to this day. We've discovered ancient remains of powerful and advanced technology that is lightyears beyond anything this galaxy has ever seen."

"The Jedi archives have never mentioned such a race."Etain was very curious now. _An ancient race of people with more advanced technology

has been here in Andromeda since the beginning of recorded history and only the Terrans know?_

"How do I know you are not making this up?"

"Well, that is a very long story, and I believe some extra privacy is required. Rei, please close the door and activate sound-proofing modules please." Lance asked. Etain was flabbergasted. He could have easily sound-proofed the room and Etain would not have known. Obviously, he purposely allowed himself to be heard. Etain narrowed her eyes.

"You could have easily done that before I listened in. Why now?"

"Let's just say I have a penchant for letting people in a loop before I tell them the full story."

"And that is?"

As the door closed, the last thing, if anyone, was outside heard was this: "Have you heard of the Forerunners?" And it closed, leaving silence to permeate the hallway once more.

To be continuedâ€¦

Long huh? I placed two segments of the present, one as a one-shot(I thank 117Jorn for inspiring that scene, and took some of it but added in some extra scenes), and another one as a teaser of the things to come. What do you think? This is my longest chapter ever.

Reply and Review.

4. Episode 4

**Note: I asked Patriot-112 to use some of his characters in his fancifictions and I will use them here. If you don't know Net'ra Kad, I suggest you look up Patriot-112 and his stories. I recommend you read them extensively. **

This is going to take long and some of it will take some influence with Star Wars The Clone Wars Season 5 finale.

Might be a bit violent and sexy, so please tell if I got this working in a T-format right?

UH-60 Nightstalker has now created the sequel, HALO: The Andromeda War. Read it now.

Episode 4: Mhi me'dinui an

{UNSC Dark Suffering, Harvest, 24 hours before Fireteam Trinity is deployed, The Past}

The Response from the UNSC High Command was rapid. With Lost Legion now deployed to the Andromeda, the atmosphere within the UNSC seemed to tense up. Their latest enemy was numerous than they were, but they have seen such numbers before. They were now ready. Admiral Lasky himself said that in the past, humanity was like mice, hiding from

the giants that stalked them relentlessly during the Human-Covenant War. Now, THEY were the giants, and they will not allow some decrepit dictator, Sith Lord or no, stomp on them.

Commander Lance Escandor grinned. He was always a bit excited before a battle. Mainly because he is one of the few Spartan IVs who relished combat and still kept an aura of authority and professionalism seen in many UNSC officers. The new weapons and armor he and his top Fireteams received for their special mission was a godsend.

Taking a deep breath, he turned around to see 10 Spartans lined up, in their Hardsuits, de-armored, and alert. The men and women under his command were dedicated and prepared. They were all brothers and sisters, and all were family to each other. Well, some more than others.

He looked over to a certain blue-haired Asian woman standing next to Lheanna "Lady" Solis, and winked at her, with her smiling slightly to signify that she understood that.

He then became professional in his demeanor and began to address all of them present in the crowd:

"Gentlemen, Ladies, Spartans, Listen up! We got ourselves another War coming up on the Andromeda, and it is the size of the Covenant War machine, if not larger. And our operations are strictly confidential; as we will help some turncoats take a secret Republic Facility that our AI have not found yet."

"Our first major assignment after Doisac, I need not to remind you just how long that is. We have known a peace that for the first time in the Milky Way Galaxy, humanity has experienced with joy and serenity. But our boys over at Andromeda are in a different situation, one where a power hungry dictator has lied and manipulated an entire galaxy to war. I think we know who to compare that bastard to: The Prophets."

At the very mention of the Prophets, hands and jaw clenched instantly. The anger that most humans felt over the lies that drove humanity to near extinction is still running strong, and many who joined the Spartans want to ensure that this never happens again, sanctioned or not.

"Now, we are under orders of one Lt. Joseph Roberts and he happens to tell us that our hosts, Kal Skirata and his Skirata Clan, are going to walk us through the complex we are about to raid. He tells us that there are some rogue Clones in the vicinity, or potential rogue Clones, so we will wait and see how this goes, but we will be above Kashyyyk when that happens."

"I know you want to be a part of the fight, and believe me, I want to be in that party. But we got orders, and General Chernof stated that the Republic is going to play dirty. We're here to make sure all the Republic's cards are on the table, for the UNSC to see. Any questions?"

Chris "Hot Rod" Ryans, leader of Fireteam Outlaw, spoke up "Sir, can they be trusted? I heard that Mandalorians mostly take up merc work, and they can turn us over for the highest bidder."

Lance nodded. "Correct, they can do that, but intel on Kal Skirata is that he is more of a traditionalist. HE ain't gonna break his word if we won't break ours. He's not in it for himself, and he wants his "sons" to survive whatever hell we unleash on the Republic, so it won't be an issue. Nevertheless, keep an eye out. We can't be too sure given the latest developments in Andromeda."

"This is our time, people! For too long, humanity has been mice, scurrying, hiding from the giants that came to our homes. We have always reacted, but never struck first. Now, that changes. Now, we strike first. NOW, We show him just who the real giant is in this galaxy!" Lance exclaimed, with the Spartans now standing up straighter than before.

"The being in this galaxy thinks himself a giant, and can step on us as he wishes. We will show him, that we are the larger entity in this galaxy. We will show every last living being in this galaxy how the UNSC fights, and show them how a real giant steps stomps on his foes." He finished, looking at his group.

"We move out 0800 hours. Get some sleep, Spartans. Tomorrow is one hell of a long day. Dismissed." And with that, all Spartans dispersed to different parts of the ship. The Female Blue-haired Spartan, Lawrence "Wren" Yomomoto, used her lips to convey a message "Your quarters, later" and left with her teammates. Lance smiled, as he had something to look forward to when he was done with talking over Captain Lorenzo Mends with the destination.

Lance and Lawrence had been best friends since their elementary years. She was a pretty, yet tomboyish girl, and Lance was a shameless, yet honest boy who met in the suburban neighborhood of New Davao in Mindanao Prime, Gamma Sector. They were best friends and stuck to each other like glue ever since. They had been through lots of rough times, but they stuck together in even the toughest storms.

They enlisted in the UNSC after their college years and proved to be very good in most academic and physical tests, so they were invited to become Spartan IVs, an honor that his older brother, David, declined.

Lawrence, or Wren, as she liked to be called, had always like the boy, but had began to have feelings for him during a Spartan Training exercise, where complications arose in a simulation chamber, and the rounds were live. A sentry gun had gone haywire and Wren caught a bullet in the leg and was about to get another until Lance jumped in to dismantle the gun with an IED. He got reprimanded for destroying equipment, but got commended on saving the life of a fellow soldier, claiming "I did it because I never leave my friends." Since then, Wren had slowly feelings for Lance, but he did not see it that way and only saw his best friend as a friend only, until Doisac.

On that Brute homeworld, she and then Lieutenant Lance gathered Spartans who survived ambushes from Brutes to band together against the overwhelming odds. Behind enemy lines, Lance lead them through, and were about to be extracted until a Brute was about to hit Wren with a Gravity Hammer. Lance took the hit instead at the last moment, and was in critical, with Wren saving him, but breaking down emotionally at her best friend nearly killed because she got

careless.

He had passed information to Command that the Brutes had multiple NOVA Class bombs ready to detonate and the UNSC retreated in time before the Brutes could detonate. Meanwhile, Lance was lying unconscious with Wren looking on. He had been in a coma for a week, and recovered. And the first person he'd laid eyes on was Wren, and his brother. Since then, they grew closer and closer until on December 1, 2607, they'd confessed their feelings to each other and kissed in a rather romantic manner underneath fireworks bristling in the planet they were one when they celebrated New Year

Since then, both became a couple and could have left the program. But they also loved their occupation as Spartans and stayed on, despite the obstacles the Spartan program could throw on the couple, with missions that tested their loyalties and moralities. They remained inseparable since. Many would believe that because Wren is dating her superior Commander, she'd get the easy jobs. In fact, she got many tough jobs and Lance only approved those missions that involved cleaning out heavily fortified Brute strongholds that remained. She eventually proceeded to become part of the illustrious Fireteam Crimson. And with his outstanding work in the field, Lance was promoted to Commander, and created Lost Legion with the men and women whom he served alongside in Doisac.

The peace that came allowed the couple to enjoy time for each other.

Lance had finished going over the details of the op with the Captain and headed to his quarters. He heard running water when he got in and saw a rather beautiful figure taking a shower in his bathroom. Lance smiled a bit and turned around so as to not see her, even though it was very tempting to.

"Lance, why don't you join me a bit?" Wren asked in a teasing manner.

"Tempting, but I still have some paperwork to file out. Even with an AI, paperwork will never die." Lance said, but that just made it even more irresistible to join his girlfriend in the bathroom.

"Always the gentleman," She droned, and turned her head so that she faced Lance, with her 'assets' also facing Lance. He flushed a bit, but he kept neutral about it. He'd seen that a lot of times during their nights together.

"Very, very tempting. Tell you what: Give me your opinion in all this?" He referred to the War. He had always allowed his men to have opinions on the situation. He knew that his Spartans could solve a problem, given the right tools and information.

"Well, for one thing, this Palpatine guy seems to play helpless old man, but after the briefing, but he has more power than simple manipulation and deception." Lance nodded. Since the discovery of the Force, many in the UNSC and Intelligence wanted to find a way to harness such power to apply in certain warfare branches, but because of the monastic lifestyle and their obligation to the Republic, it seemed out of the way for them.

Since then, CBMI took a close eye on the Jedi, in the event they

would be a threat. But with the new information on Sith, they started to move them up the threat list. Even if they was just two, Sith have been known to be extremely dangerous, even by Spartan standards.

"And, I know for fact that even he may look and sound like a frail old codger, but put him in a room with the most powerful individuals in the galaxy and he'll make them dance like puppets."

Wren seemed pleased, and moved on to another topic. "Don't you think it's strange to ask a Spartan IV team to carry this out when a Spartan II team can do it easily?" She was referring to Red Team, a Spartan II team that was with the UNSC Spirit of Fire when it was found. Since then, they had been attached to Lost Legion.

"Well they got a bit rusty with sleeping, so I guess some War Games on the Cole would do them good. Now I think I need a bath." Lance smirked and took off his shirt. "I really need rest anyway, before the storm gets me all dirty again."

Wren smirked "What about Paperwork?"

Lance replied "That comes later." And with that, Lance joined her in.

Wren smiled deviously and seductively gestured Lance to join her. He stepped in, and hugged her, brushing some hair off her face, cupping it and kissed her gently as the water pattered down on their faces, and the door closed from behind.

* * *

><p>{Coruscant, 2 hours after Jedi intervention of the UNSC embassy.}<p>

Bardan Jusik was caught between a rock and a hard place.

The Chancellor has finally made his move, and now the Terrans are taking refuge in the Temple, with the Jedi protecting them. Bardan knew that while he had a duty to be with his fellow Jedi, he was also a Mandalorian, formally inducted by Kal Skirata himself. Between saving his new family and aiding his old one, Bardan's choices are very limited.

He had made it eventually and decided to go to Laseema's to see how Venku, Zilka, and Besany were holding up. The Nulls were still busy and would catch up in a few minutes. After that they would bail.

He made it to her apartment without a hitch.

Laseema was worried "Bardan! I'm glad you're alright, because the outside is Pandemonium!" It was true; Clone troopers stormed left and right, trying to find any Jedi outside the Temple to capture, or kill, them.

Bardan grimaced. "At this point, all we need to worry about are the Nulls, our escape route and Etain, and not in that order." He was tasked by Kal to look after the Nulls and Etain, but he can't do two things at once.

The door opened, and the women jumped, and Bardan activated his lightsaber. He breathed a sigh of relief when it revealed to be only Ordo and the Nulls. Besany ran up to Ordo and tackled him in a hug, kissing him as well.

"Where have you been?! I was worried out of my mind!" She said worriedly, clinging on to him like a life preserver.

Ordo returned the hug. "Sorry, cyar'ika. We got caught up a bit." He kissed her forehead and turned to Jusik. "We've covered our tracks; We're clean." Bardan nodded.

"Alright people, we have what we need, we are leaving now!" He said, grabbing some packages and carrying it. Anything unnecessary would be left behind, and only valuable would be carried along.

"What about Etain?" Kom'rk Skirata asked. Bardan cursed silently to himself.

"We have no choice. Between saving her or her child, I picked child. Besides, Etain specifically told me to rescue him first, or she'd strangle me." He shuddered. Even though she was a Jedi, Etain was one scary woman if her son got so much as a paper cut.

"Well, I hope the UNSC send their reinforcements in time. We have to get to Nyreen before the GAR commence a blockade." Ordo said.

"Right, move it!" And the group double their pace to the hangars, where they found a large transport carrier ready for them. Nyreen was ready for them. "Ready to go, guys? I feel rather uncomfortable waiting for the republic to blast us down." She said in a joking manner. Nyreen was always cool under pressure.

"Alright, let's get this show on the road." Bardan said. Everyone strapped in and they launched. They were about to hit the upper atmosphere when they got hailed. They saw on their left that a Republic Gunship was hovering nearby.

"Attention, citizen craft. This is the GAR. You are not authorized to liftoff. Return to your landing pad. We shall then conduct a search for any suspicious or illegal contraband. That is all." The Gunship hailed.

Zilka was now thoroughly worried. "What are we gonna do now?" Bardan bit his lip and Nyreen was getting tense. IF they tried to run, they would be shot down. If they complied, they would be inspected, AND THEN shot in that order. Just as Bardan was running out of time, another hail came through.

It was a Clone Commander, by the looks and color scheme of his armor. "This is CC-2224, what is the situation here." The Nulls' hearts sank. If Commander Cody busted them now, they will all be in jeopardy.

"Sir, we got an unauthorized transport vessel about to leave Coruscant. Our ship picked up the ID tags on this and we got no information on it. We want to conduct a search and sweep on the vessel."

Bardan feared their ruse was now blown, but what happened next shocked both parties.

"No." Commander Cody said, and both parties blinked disbelievingly.

"What?! Nyreen and the Clone in the Gunship said in the same time.

"You heard me." Commander Cody said. The Clone began to protest. "But the Blockade-"

"Only works if they are sympathizers and collaborators of the UNSC. They are mercs. Besides, I did tell them to leave this planet, and that they'd contact me to allow passage. If you are not convinced, then I provoke Contingency Order 64.*"***The Nulls knew what that Order meant. It meant that any previous orders are to be disregarded and the Clones are to return to HQ, regardless of the situation. They then await further Contingency Orders to be given.

Everyone in Nyreen's ship all looked at each other. This was not part of their plan. But they welcomed it, nonetheless. IF Commander Cody was working with Kal, then he could be part of the rogue Clones that have begun to splinter from the GAR.

The Clone was silent, until he muttered: "Affirmative. Returning to base now." And the Gunship broke off and retreated back to the base below. Bardan could not have believed his luck. That easy? He thanked the Force for that.

"Thanks, Cody. I always knew you'd turn to our side."He said. Unfortunately, "Cody" isn't what he says he is.

"Well it's a pleasure."Said Cody in a voice that belonged to a woman rather than a Clone. The occupants were shocked that Cody started to change into a woman with Data lines traveling up and down her body.

Zilka was in shock "Who-Wha-What are you?"She stuttered.

"CBMI AI Mouse, at your service. I believe that I'm here to facilitate your escape."She greeted. Ordo was intrigued.

"How did you manage to gain that information to get that Clone off our backs?"Ordo asked, knowing that information used to get the Clones to obey are tightly guarded secrets

"Let's just say that your Super Computers are not as tightly guarded as you think."She said in a cryptic and teasing manner. Ordo decided to leave it at that. He'd ask more if they were not running.

"Alright," Bardan said "Can we be able get into UNSC space safely? I don't want to bring all my friends and family here to burn in this ship as I enter UNSC space."

Mouse chuckled. "I think I can arrange that. All you need to do is go there. Roberts made sure that Kal's family is safe behind UNSC lines in Worth."

Bardan however had doubts. "What of Etain Tur-Mukan?"

"Leave her to us." And she logged off.

Nyreen had doubts too. "You sure about this, Bardan?"

Bardan hesitated in giving an answer for two full seconds before giving her an answer.

"Yes, now, let's just pray the UNSC get here in time and save Etain, while we leave the Republic for good." And with that, they jumped into hyperspace.

* * *

><p>{Kashyyyk, 30 minutes before Order 66 is announced}<p>

"UNSC Dark Suffering has arrived, Commander. Bringing the Stealth generators online, and maintaining orbit." Captain Mends announced.

"Excellent." Commander Escandor said. He had a wonderful 7 hours, and he enjoyed it. He hoped that one day, he will put down the gun for good and live with his girlfriend, but for now, he was content with what he got.

And what he got are state of the art Mjolnir Mark X Power Armors, Hardlight Bows, and a whole load of firepower to level a city. There were 3 AI to help with the Mission. His personal AI, Rei, who was based off one of his earliest friends, was wearing a rather modest school girl uniform, since Lance remembered her as such. The AI for Crimson was Katrina, an AI based from a woman in a 19th century pilgrim, and Reagan, an AI that bases himself from an old President of the United States of America.

The teams loaded up and were ready to go when they received additional info. According to Mouse, the AI responsible for bugging Coruscant, she had discovered that Ko Sai, a Kaminoan that was under Kal Skirata to find a cure for the rapid aging process of the clones, was confirmed to be in the facility. So to rescue her, they'd not only fulfill some parts of Kal's deal, they'd find one of the creators responsible for the cloning process, and can help the UNSC in the genetics department.

Ko Sai was in collaboration with Kal on the cure until her disappearance. Mouse had been searching her since and when Kal came with the information of the base, she found references to her in the base thanks to Kal's inside help. Kal himself does not know yet as Mouse had only recently found the info pertaining to her location and her work done in some secret backdoor in the Chancellor's database.

She'd been "recruited" to help with some rather shady projects that were commissioned by Palpatine himself. Whatever it is, Lance knew that this mission now had a new objective: Find Ko Sai, and walk her out.

Rei spoke up. "Hey boss, we got another ship in the atmosphere. ID tags it as the Prosecutor."

"And who does that belong to?" Lance asked.

"A Mandalorian PMC known as Ne'tra Kad, an independent group with strong ties to the Republic and our Cuv'yal Dar." Rei provided. Lance crunched his eyebrows. This PMC group, even though it was a purely Mandalorian group, was a strong supporter of the Republic, and aided the UNSC during the Battle of Jabiim. They have had some strong ties with both groups since. He also knew that some of their leaders, Marik Mereel-Orar, is in a relationship with Zule Xiss, the Jedi in charge of the Padawan Pack, after Aubrie Wyn. Intelligence claims to be on Kal's side, but Lance was not sure about it.

"Sir," Spartan Lady spoke up, "We need to know if they are a threat to our operations. Can we initiate a tap in their communications?" She asked.

Lance, Overlord, was in thought, and decided to chance it. "Did we inform Kal Skirata of our presence yet?"

Wren shook her head. "Nope, not since we arrive here." Overlord weighed his options a bit, then came to a decision.

"We will maintain radio silence until we get confirmation on the ground. Outlaw will stay on station until then, and I will take Crimson to ground and meet our hosts."

Chris "Hot Rod" Ryans spoke up. "Sir, if they are hostile, what then?"

Overlord brought up a holo-display. "We launch first, then Dark Suffering can move silently and quickly to the rear of the Prosecutor, and the MAC Cannon pointed at the Bridge from behind. It will be close enough to negate any armor and shielding in the Prosecutor at that close distance."

Kym "White" Canizares thought this was a bit extreme. "You do realize that you're not going to make a lot of friends doing this." she pointed out.

"I'm being cautious, White. I don't mark them as friendly until I get word. I will have the captain initiate a planetary communications blackout courtesy of the Jammer systems on the ship. We will then intercept any communications that come in and out of the planet. Then if it is all clear, Fireteam Outlaw can join in the fight, when we have our plates full."

"Any other concerns?" The Fireteams stayed silent. "Good, then we head over the hangars. This operation begins now." And the Spartans activated their armors and the nano-armor assembled the Mjolnir armor over the group, and they went to the drop hangars.

Raul "Wrecker" Mendoza piqued up. "When do we inform our allies that we are in the system?"

Overlord smiled in his armor. "While we drop."

* * *

><p>{Kashyyyk, 3 miles from the facility,}<p>

Kal and Walon were tired of waiting. Both men were planning this for weeks now, and the Cuy'val Dar were able to convince the clones that trained under them to defect. The amount of people who defected were already comparable to Sector Army Strength.

A few days ago, good news and bad news came to Kal and his group. The Good news is that Ne'tra Kad was going to join their defection because they will not stand on what the Republic has become, and because some of them have very personal ties to some of the Jedi.

"I hate this waiting, Kal." Marik Mereel-Orar, one of the commanders of Ne'tra Kad, said.

"I know, vod. I understand that you have a cyar'ika back in Coruscant, specifically someone in the Temple?" Kal asked, and he nodded miserably, even for a Mandalorian. Kal was in good contact with Marik and his Net'ra Kad. He also knew he was in a relationship with the Falleen Jedi Zule Xiss, when he saved her in Jabim. He was only recently informed and was on his way to the Jedi Temple when he heard of the UNSC embassy being raided and their inhabitants taking refuge to the Temple when he received a call from his contacts that a blockade is in place, preventing anything entering and leaving the planet. As try as he might, he cannot get in. So Kal asked for his help, he took it when he was convinced that this will help Zule and her group.

"I don't know. I worked with the UNSC before, but even I doubt they can punch through those defenses alone. I should have waited in Coruscant." He grimaced. Kal put a hand on his friend's shoulder.

"She's a tough Jedi, Marik. If anyone is to survive what's coming, it's her." He reassured him. Marik looked at the gruff older man, and nodded, before putting his helmet back on.

Meanwhile, the combined Commando teams of Delta and Omega were waiting. Delta had been convinced by Walon Vau to defect and now there were here, sans one member. Their sniper, Sev, had been missing since their mission to take down a CIS Cruiser that was orbiting overhead a Wookie base camp. Scorch took it personally. Fixer, while a by-the-â€"books type of guy, went AWOL as well because while he did not show it, he took his death hard as well, and disgusted that Command will not even lift a finger for that. Boss himself was taking it hard as Sev was his responsibility as team leader.

Darman was also feeling worried. He had only received word that Coruscant was now in lockdown, and he feared the worst. He had to worry about that later. Etain was counting on him to do his job right. If he did, the knowledge could help the UNSC get to Etain faster, at least that's what he thought.

Fi sat down near the space next to him "So, guys? We are now officially rogues. Anyone else feel like getting a glass of an alcoholic beverage strong enough to knock out a Wookiee?" He joked.

Corr grinned. "Yeah, I'm with you on that. After all the shit the Republic put us through, it's nice to know that we can start some fires underneath their collective asses and get away with it too."

Delta went rogue when they were ordered by their commander to stand down. As Sev was hopelessly surrounded, he fell fighting, and that was the last straw in terms of loyalty, as they rushed to save him, but it was too late. The only things left were his sniper rifle and helmet.

The Clones trained under the Cuy'val Dar directly actually had little to no issues about abandoning the Republic. Many of them feel angry of how much the Republic treats its troops, like disposable cannon fodder. Rex himself attested that some Jedi use them the same way a Neimodian uses droids. Darman was actually glad inside for awhile, until he began to worry for Etain again. But that would be interrupted.

The comms started to pick up, and an unknown voice sounded over the group. "Challenge: If all men are brothers?" The voice said cryptically. Kal knew what this meant. UNSC uses this to identify friendlies.

"Then all wars are civil wars." Kal replied.

"Nice to meet you all. Name's Overlord. We are arriving on your position." Overlord said.

Marik and Fixer were confused. "But we're not detecting anything."

Kal demanded. "Is this a trick? Where are you really?"

Overlord sighed. "Look up."

Kal did, and the next thing he knew he and the group he was with was with were blown away. Literally.

A whoosing noise was heard, and the next, 5 armored beings descended onto the ground like gods from the heavens, with the impact literally knocking over anyone standing nearby. When the dust cleared, the Omega and Delta had their guns trained on the assailants, but their assailants were much more than simple droids.

From the clones' perspective, they were looking at oversized droids, but Kal knew different. The UNSC has not only given him aid, they gave him Spartans. He heard stories, of course, but to see these beings that inspired the Terrans was a different thing altogether.

The beings stood up, their armor bulky and some variations between them. They had some rather exotic weaponry that the clones have not seen on a normal UNSC soldier, and their helmets are the ones that seem to tell which one is which. One of them, the one in blue and white plating, came to them, his helmet to look menacing, even his shoulder pads have some strange insignias not seen on normal soldiers.

Kal was still a bit shell-shocked to move and the being offered his hand to help him up. "Sorry for that, but we love dropping in on parties. Overlord, and the people behind me are Fireteam Crimson."

"What the hell? Where did you come from?" Darman finally regained from the shock and asked.

"Up" The Spartan pointed upwards.

"I don't understand. How does that explain how you guys got here and us on our behinds at the same time?" Atin said.

"Well, RC-8015, that is something to tell for another time, so use your imagination for a bit." Overlord said, shocking everyone but Kal about his sudden knowledge on Atin.

"Wait, how do you know his serial number? That isn't a loose thing to give away, even to allies." Scorch asked.

"We look into our allies before we consider them allies, and in the same topic," Overlord turned to Marik and asked "Is this your ship?" And showed a holographic representation of the Prosecutor. Marik widened his eyes, but stayed neutral in his facial expressions, much to his credit.

"Yes, Kal contacted us because he knew that some Clones are on our side and he contacted me to get them out, since we are the only Mandalorian PMC in this galaxy large enough to get them out."

He then went into private comms in the helmet and activated his communicator to his ship.

"This is Overlord. Dark Suffering, stand down, Prosecutor is a friendly, repeat, friendly."

"Roger that, Overlord, standing down." A voice said on the other side of the comms.

"And Decloak while you're at it. Let's see them squirm in their chairs a bit." Overlord ordered. "Our ship that brought us here is cloaked and your friends will be able to detect it now." He said to Marik, who was still flabbergasted.

An affirmative later and the ship decloaked. Marik's comms beeped rapidly after that. Sasha was answering first.

"Marik, this is Sasha, we got trouble! A-" She was cut off by Marik.

"Ship suddenly just appeared out of nowhere?" He said. Sasha blinked a few times before speaking again.

"Yeah, but they are directly behind us, and scans indicate it is a UNSC frigate type of an unknown class." Marik was shocked. Not only was the thing cloaked, but it was cloaked in close proximity without detection. His ship may be a bit rough around the edges, but the advanced scanners on the Prosecutor would have picked them up by now.

Overlord seemed to know this, because he said. "We have been using cloak technology for centuries. So it comes as no surprise to us that you can't find something even with all your entire advanced scanners in this entire galaxy put together." He gloated, and with good reason, since it was tested by those scanners as well.

Marik then remembered that Sasha said that the ship was directly behind them. "Was your ship about to fire on ours?" He asked. Overlord simply shrugged.

"Depends if you were friendly or not." He said. Marik narrowed his eyes at him, but said nothing.

"Right then, I've been told that Delta and Omega are going to be our house guests for this evening. And I was also told that each of you had 4 members in a squad." Overlord pointed out, looking at Delta's members.

Many of them bowed, and Walon Vau spoke up for them. "They lost their brother during a skirmish with Trandoshaan slavers that commandeered a CIS Battle Cruiser. How they did it was beyond me, but there were a lot of them to be sure."

Overlord was skeptical. He could have just simply let the topic slide there, but he did not reach his position by letting things slide. "Rei, do me a favor and patch in to any Trandoshaan communication systems, if any, in the planet." He said.

Soren "Maverick" Maven was confused. "Boss, why are you looking in the Trandoshaans. We have our own mission, and besides, these guys don't kid when their people get killed. Leave it be." He advised.

"Your input is appreciated, Maverick, but I think we should try and play nice with these Clones. Will help us out in the long run, anyway. Now Rei, search for any hints or some signs of any slaves matching RC-1207's description."

"Looking for dead man, are we? On it, I'll inform you if I find anything." Rei said, and blinked out. Overlord then turned his attention to the clones assembled.

"Alright, I assume you know the way?" He asked Kal, who nodded, and with a silent nod, everyone left the camp towards the Facility.

Marik opened his channels a bit to private, so that only Kal and Walon can hear. "Can we trust them? They just opened up a big can of rancors on us without knowing and we may be getting more than our bargain's worth. Besides, 5 guys? I don't see this mission going on without Net'ra Kad coming in."

Kal simply shrugged. "We will soon find out. Besides, I hope you will take notes."

Walon was confused, yet very confident in his next words. "You think these metal cans are better than our boys? You must be starting to lose it." he scoffed.

Kal however, knew just how effective these Spartans are, and as much as he hated to say it, they could take out half of Mandalore on their own if need be. But he kept his silence. They will soon learn not to underestimate his allies. Walon was very confident of his sons' abilities, and so did Kal. But he knew for a fact that the Spartans of the UNSC are held in high regard for a reason. He knows that as a

warrior, one must respect a fellow warrior's power and strength.

He just didn't realize how much of that strength he will witness.

* * *

><p>{Kashyyyk, on the other side of the planet, Dark Suffering Briefing Room B.}<p>

Hot Rod was looking over the files with his team behind him. Joseph "Wizard" Tan, Kym Sara "White" Canizares, Mack "Mac" Stancel, and Jake "Circus" Madrigal were already loading up on standard UNSC weaponry, plus some covenant equipment and a few Hardlight Shields in, together with a brand new DE HE Cluster Grenade made specifically for Warrior Teams that seek maximum casualties in a span of a few seconds. Hot Rod was using the MA8D Assault Rifle, with normal 7.62 rounds and the new Hardlight rounds and an underbarrel grenade launcher, and a Magnum and with one Asymmetric Recoilless Carbine-920, or Railgun with an improved battery for two shots, Wizard chose the Designated Marksman Rifle(DMR) with extended clip and underslung holo projector, with M9 caseless SMG with attached suppressor as a backup, White taking her 99-S5 Anti Material Sniper Rifle with additional clips, and a BR85 Heavy Barrel Service Rifle as her back-up, complete with Holographic projector and using a Type 3 Refraction Dissonance Modifier, or Camouflage, Mac taking his trusty M6 Grindell/Galliean Nonlinear Rifle, with an improved laser cooling system for faster firing, and M739 Light Machine Gun, with an extended clip, and with improved accuracy ratings, and Circus chose a Tactical Shotgun and an MA8D Assault Rifle with an experimental Underslung Railgun and Target finder.

Most of the Spartans in this group have been reassigned. Instead of providing backup for Crimson, they would be deployed to a nearby Trandoshan slaver base that was formerly a CIS armored vehicle facility. The Trandoshans reprogrammed the droids in the facility to aid them. Rei identified the facilities' areas of interest and marked them up with the blueprints and gave it to Reagan.

"Alright people listen up! We are on a smash-and-grab mission to locate RC-1207, or Sev, from the Trandoshan bastards who now control the facility. Intel suggests that they managed to reprogram the droids from a central network facility in the middle of the complex; first objective goes to Circus and Wizard. You two will be in charge of taking care of that and reprogram the droids to make exfil easier. Mac and I will sweep and clean the facility while White provides overwatch. We will make some noise until Wizard finds our Clone, and then we use the facility as a temporary base as Dark Suffering will be assisting the Prosecutor if any Republic reinforcements show up. Our Pelicans can reach the facility in 5 minutes when they reach upper atmosphere, so when the enemy comes, we will be able to provide exfil. Any questions?"

Wizard then asked "Sir, we can get into the facility but unless a fireworks display is on, they could just simply go on lockdown and it will take a while to get around that, even with Reagan's help."

Mac then replied. "That's my job, Wizard, you just worry about getting the droids to shoot the lizards and locate our VIP."

White then decided to end it. The sooner this mission is over, the

better chances of success Crimson will have in convincing the Clones to trust the Spartans. "Let's get this show on the road, sir." she said

Hot Rod nodded. "Alright, if nothing else, assemble over at the drop Hangars. We move in 10."

* * *

><p>{Prosecutor, Near the UNSC Dark Suffering}<p>

The Mandalorians in the ship were now in a tense mood. They stood vigilant, ready to counter whatever the unknown ship was ready to dole out, until Sasha tagged them as friendlies. Roman and Revy, two commanders within Ne'tra Kad, discussed briefly.

Revy was showing her apparent dislike to the whole situation. "This is starting to look more and more like a bad Tatooine bar about to go south." She commented. Roman rolled his eyes.

"Look, I know this is a sticky situation, but Kal and Marik personally vouched for these UNSC spooks. They're clean."He said.

Sasha came over and inserted herself in the conversation. "More like, Kal agreed and Marik just followed right after. What of Trips and Jade Lee?"She was close friends with the 247th Hades Corps alongsided Commander Trips and Jade Lee. "If I see anyone else defecting, it would be them."

Revy smiled a bit "Some good news: They did defect, and alongside CC-0732 'Bolt' of the 187th Legion, the 442nd Siege Battalion, the 55th Mechanized Brigade, and the 85th Infantry Brigade are with them as well. There are also the Torrent Company under Rex and the Slice Hounds. We still have a lot more, but it is too soon to tell how many. But at this rate, we'd peak at beyond Sector Army strength."

Roman and Sasha dropped their jaws. Just as they were about to respond, the captain ordered for the presence of the Ne'tra Kad to the bridge. Composing themselves they headed over.

Once there, Revy asked. "What's going on?" The Captain ordered to zoom in on the ship, specifically the bow area. They saw a large door opening and five figures came into view. Roman swore when he saw them, causing his two colleagues to turn around to face him.

"What? What is it?" Sasha asked. Roman paled and said. "They didn't just send UNSC spooks."

"Huh? What are you talking about?"

"They sent Spartans."He said.

"Spartans? So what? We Mandalorians are more than our armor. Besides, we got cooler armor." Revy gloated, but then her face paled when she saw those figures step out and into space, and allowed them to be being pulled into the atmosphere.

"ARE THEY CRAZY?!" Revy shrieked. "They'll be burnt wampas by the

time the reach the upper atmosphere!" She predicted, but to her surprise they did not, in fact, a small black portal emerged in their trajectory, and they entered it, and disappeared.

The entire ship was in shock. A feat of impossibility was witnessed firsthand. Then Revy and Sasha moved to Roman and they had serious faces on them.

"Alright Roman, tell me what you know about these guys. They seem a bit too advanced coming from a supposedly primitive race." Sasha said.

Roman took a seat and began to explain.

* * *

><p>{Kashyyyk, 1780 miles above the Trandosha camp, closing in on LZ}<p>

"Closing in on LZ in 2 minutes." Reagan announced.

"I also detect a few Trandosha mercs near that vicinity. Might be a time to show them the boot, so to speak?" He suggested.

"That is a very good idea, Reagan." Hot Rod answered. "White, Mac, on my flanks. Let's make a soft, squishy landing."

On the ground a few Trandosha mercs and commandos were patrolling the area, when they heard a faint whoosing noise. They raised their weapons in alarm, but did not know where it was coming from, until 3 armored beings landed on 3 mercs, disintegrating them in a shower of guts and blood, while the other 2 armored beings landed on the others, producing similar results. The wind around them blew in all directions, with birds scattering in the distance.

Hot Rod then stood up and began to run, and the rest followed in his footsteps, holding ballistic knives at the ready. They did not stop for anything. And any Trandosha between them and their goal was gored, mauled or mutilated, or all three. And they did it without missing a step.

Unlike the Hunting tactics of Crimson, and their counterpart, Aqua, Outlaw is a more rapid approach to stealth, with the use of Ballistic knives to take out enemies instead of silenced weapons, with the exclusion of Wizard.

They eventually reached the compound, leaving a trail of Trandosha bodies in their wake.

"Alright, split up! White head to the coordinates for overwatch. Wizard, Circus, Head for the sewer lines. Mac, on me! We are knocking the doors down."

All moved to positions, all the while with Reagan providing additional info on the fly.

Mac and Hot Rod began setting charges, 4 for one side of the complex. They were going to detonate them simultaneously but use only one entrance as the other three will be used to distract. Wizard and Circus arrived at the waypoint to await further orders, while White

took cover above the trees and provided an eagle eye view of the compound.

Circus then began cutting into the sewer line and he and Wizard are on the move. By the time they get to the closest possible location of the server room, Mac and Hot Rod move to the side where there are a few Trandoshans and the furthers area from the servers, so to provide a distraction as Wizard hacks the servers.

Mac and Hot Rod planted the last explosive and waited for the ready response.

All of them said ready, and Mac detonated the explosives around the compound. The explosions were heard everywhere, sending some Trandoshans who were standing too close to the walls flying into the air, the rest were knocked down, and gunned down by the two Spartans. The Trandoshans were alerted and sent Battle-Droids, B1's, Droidekas, and Trandoshan Commandoes and Juggernauts wielding chainguns to the vicinity, hoping to use numbers to annihilate the enemy.

Turns out, numbers meant that using cluster-grenades all the more effective. Hot Rod moved quick to close the gap and get into cover, while Mac used his slipspace teleporter to gain a height advantage at the second floor and provide Hot Rod with Cover. The Trandoshans and The Droids were quickly confused as to which target they should take out, but it was pointless, as the group was cut down, and the Droidekas with the energy shields were blown away by the Spartan Laser and the Railgun.

Hot Rod took out a few more Trandoshans on the ground level and Mac wasted 3 B1 Battle Droids that came in his level. And advanced to the next room, where the whole thing repeats.

Wizard and Circus finally made it to the main server room. Circus was hailed by their team sniper.

"Circus, this is White. Be advised: A group of Trandoshans have just turned to your direction. I'll slow them down, but there's battle droids with them, recommend that you hurry up."She advised.

"Copy that."Circus acknowledged. Then he went over to Wizard.

"How much time do you need?"

"1 minute."Then projectiles, both slug and energy based, pinged off the door.

"Make it 30 seconds. I'll hold them" Circus said, and used the underslung Railgun to thin the herd, as the hallway bunched up the hostiles in a line, effectively making one Railgun shot 3-4 casualties each. He fired, taking many Trandoshans down, but more were coming in fast. He switched to shotgun when they got close. Eventually when the last one fell, Wizard gave the OK signs.

"We're in."

* * *

><p>{Cell B57, Same time frame}<p>

Sev woke up to blaster fire. He immediately stood up; finally ready to leave this hell hole. He always knew his brothers had his back, and lost no faith in them whatsoever, even if he already lost his faith in the Republic.

However, he heard another sound that didn't sound very often: Gunfire. Someone else was here. Judging from the screams of dying Trandoshans, he concluded that his saviours were using projectile weaponry. And aside from the projectile weaponry used by slavers, he ruled out one other possibility: UNSC.

His mind scanned of the possibilities of what they want. Being the more aggressive of Delta Squad, he settled on the more hostile scenario and began to prepare to ambush whoever was coming. The Gunfire stopped, and heavy footsteps could be heard approaching his door. He tried to identify what kind of person from the footsteps. Too heavy to be a normal soldier, yet fast enough to fit a commando walking in a brisk manner.

Outside, Hot Rod used his VISR HUD to identify their packages. He found some amusement that he was planning to ambush whoever came to open the cell. They were briefed on the personality profiles by CBMI AI reports on Kamino and their facilities. For a sniper, his attitude matches that of heavy weapons specialist with short temper issues. His attitude would work best with the Hunter branches.

Ordering Mac to be on lookout, Hot Rod ordered Reagan to open the door, and walked in.

Sev saw the door opening and lunged, only to hit something akin to a duracrete enforced wall, and fell on his back. He shook of the disorientation of the hit and took a good look at his "savior" and his eyes widened. A 6 foot tall mountain of a man was standing with his weapons holstered. He was armored in what he could describe as a B1 battle droid with a helmet not too dissimilar to the style of the Mandalorians, but was much more different as the visor was a single slit and his helmet was square in shape and bulky in nature**(AN: Hot Rod is wearing the Commando Armor)**.He offered one of his hands out to help Sev back up. The UNSC logo on his right shoulder pads confirmed Sev's suspicions, but he was actually shocked that such a being existed within the UNSC, as briefings on their forces indicate only normal, unmodified soldiers as the only fighting force available in the UNSC. To think such a behemoth existed in that army indicated a severe intelligence blunder within the GAR. Sev presumed that they were droids that were more armored than the CIS.

"RC-1207 I presume?"The armored figure asked. Sev was taken aback, as his earlier presumption of them being droids was blown away. The speech pattern was too natural, unlike the mechanical pitches of droids that he used to hear. They must be augmented humans, like the Clone Commando version of the UNSC. He did not cherish the thought.

"What's it to you?" Sev asked in a hostile tone, not trusting the being in front of him.

"My boss asked me to walk you out of this dump. Name's Hot Rod. I'm here to get you out of here."

"On whose orders?"

"My Commander, Overlord, who's with Delta and Omega squad. I believe that you know one Walon Vau? He's with them." Sev took his hand and got up.

"Alright, since getting me to trust you, you can start by getting my guns back. I hope you have some spare sniper rifles in that armor of yours." He said.

Hot Rod shook his head. "Not quite, so you'll have to settle with this." He then handed some blaster pistols from some downed droids.

"Not as good as your weapons, but will have to do for the time being." Hot Rod said. Sev took them.

"Don't you think we should take the armory? These guns are no rancor killers." Sev said.

"We have time. We're in no rush, so for now we wait here, until we get further orders." Hot Rod said.

Sev wanted to argue. He wanted to get to his fellow brothers in arms, but unfortunately, his chest burned. He must have broken some ribs "ambushing" the Spartan. Hot Rod then ordered Wizard to help out and recalled White. They were going to play the waiting game.

It didn't help Sev much that his "allies" reprogrammed the droids. Years of experience almost made him blow the first droid he saw to scrap. For the first time ever, he hated waiting.

* * *

><p>{Kashyyyk, 2 miles from the secret base, Overlord's group}<p>

Overlord and Crimson had taken the lead, and they were moving cautiously, with the Mandalorians close behind.

It had been a few minutes since their departure, and already the tension was mounting. For the Clones, they were praying that the UNSC sent these things as a way to fulfill their debt and not as a means to an end wherein they blast everyone in sight. The Spartans in turn, hope that their new allies weren't complete hinderances. Despite their training, they paled in comparison to the augmentations and experience that the Spartans bring to the group. They took rest at a clearing nearby.

Overlord was behind the group at the moment, taking the rear so that his team can scout ahead and the rest can catch up. They rested for awhile after walking to assess their gear. Fi and Corr began to check their equipment and Atin was with Marik and Walon, discussing tactics. Crimson was still scouting. And Hunting, if they encountered patrols.

He then saw Darman opening a small holo pic of him and Etain. Curious he headed over.

"Your wife, I presume?" Lance asked bluntly. Darman knew of UNSC's CBMI branch. He was told by Kal months ago about their knowledge on

him and his relationship with his wife.

"What's your business?" Darman asked coldly.

"I'm just trying to be friendly. That's all." Overlord admitted.

"Your people know about me, my family, and my wife. Only family and friends should know that. And right now, I'm talking to a stranger. A Spartan, sure, but a stranger nonetheless."

"I may have pressed a few buttons here and there. But I would like to smoothen out the wrinkles before we begin. In a battlefield, we trust with the stranger next to you as though he is your brother, because if not, we die alone."

Darman narrowed his eyes at Overlord. "What's your game, Spartan?" Inwardly, he was a bit intimidated. He has heard about Spartans in reputation and rumors alone. To see them up close was another thing altogether.

Lance shook his head "No games." And his helmet disassembled itself, revealing a young man, with semi-brown skin, with long black sideburns and black eyes. His face was rather young, in contrast to his gruff voice that portrayed him as a grizzled man. Darman's eyes widened a bit.

An armor that can disassemble and assemble at will. These are not the primitives I've been told about. Just who is the real primitive here?

"I intend to foster a bit of trust, even if you won't. Call me naÃ-ve, but I have learned the hard way that distrustful allies are no better than your worst enemy. If my mission has any chance of succeeding, and at the same time keeping my men alive, then I want to know my allies better, so I know what they're good for. I want to know what drives them, so that I can make sure that if you're with us, you'll get through this." Lance said, looking at the treeline.

Darman took his words into consideration. "What's your name?"

Lance paused before giving his reply. "Lance. My last name is not mentioned to protect my identity."

Darman snorted. "I looked at your face. That doesn't seem rather secretive anymore now, doesn't it?"

"You severely underestimate our intelligence bureau's abilities in terms of hiding identities. They can make a new life for you and still make a story believable for anyone trying to pry into your life. Essentially, they can create a bullshit story, and feed it to people like you and you'd gulp it down without a second thought."

"Perhaps." Darman shrugged.

"You're going off topic. Don't beat around the bush."

Darman stayed silent for a few moments, and then he finally said.

"Yes. She's my wife. Not officially, but after this, I intend to rectify that."

"You sure you aren't jumping into this a bit too recklessly" Lance asked.

"I already have a son." Darman stated simply.

"Oh."

"I heard about the deal you made with Skirata." Darman changed the topic.

"I have been briefed on that by the CBMI, so they might send my men to be the ones to uphold the deal."

"How many of you are there?"

"30, plus some recruits." Lance numbered.

Darman was a bit uncomfortable with that. "That's too few. We thought they'll be sending soldiers or tanks or even your big Capital Ship Reach to help retake Mandalore."

"Spartans are the most valuable members of the UNSC, despite what most outsiders think. And believe me, sending only 30 of us would be enough." Lance claimed.

"We'll see." Darman said.

"I'll make sure you get out of here alive. Then I think you may change your opinion of us."

Darman wants to say more, but Fi stepped in. He noticed Lance, and he had a rather bemused look on his face, with a hint of mischief in his eyes. Fi was the unofficial moral officer of Omega. And often, he was Darman's punching bag as most of his jokes grated on his nerves.

"What?" Darman asked in annoyance.

"Are you guys making out? 'Cuz most of the good one always land on your lap." Fi joked. Lance's face looked neutral, but turned to Darman, who had the same neutral face as well.

"Who wants first punch? Me or you?" Lance asked. Darman stood up and slugged Fi, knocking the joker to the ground.

"Why can't you guys appreciate a joke?" Fi groaned. Darman shook his head. If Fi doesn't get it, he won't be the one to tell him.

"What else are you here for aside from being a good punching bag?" Lance asked sarcastically.

"Kal is calling everyone to meet up. Your team just came in." Fi said in a serious tone, getting up.

The three of them headed over and assembled over the fire.

Lady spoke up "Sir, recon complete." And she held out her hand and a

holographic representation of the facility and surrounding areas. "Scans show a rather tight patrol schedule with little to no gaps in the routes. The perimeter defenses are tight, but Wren and Katrina assure us that they can hack it, but will take time, and that was just for starters. Lightning and Maverick found some new arrivals to the base, and they are not clones."

"Elaborate further, Spartan Lady." Lance ordered briskly.

Lady and Wren glanced at each other, and Wren then opened her TACPAD and tapped on it a few times. The overhead view of the complex then disappeared and in its place was a Kaminoan flanked by two clones. The Mandalorians and the Clones were shocked at the appearance of the alien. Unlike the scientist uniforms most Kaminoans wore, this one was in an outfit meant for outdoor wilderness. She had a cap on her head, and the most interesting thing about her was a cylindrical object on her waist. But her hands were bound by a stasis-looking device that covered her hands and bound them from behind. Her eyes were covered by an object that seems to emanate blue energy over her head.

"Recognize this one?" Lance asked.

The Clones looked at the Kaminoan as though they were looking at a ghost. In all their years, they have never encountered a Kaminoan Jedi before.

Kal shook his head. "No, never. The Kaminoans never told us of any of their people joining the Jedi Order."

Lance then activated his helmet, which set heads turning and eyes widening at the technological marvel.

"Regardless, if this one is being held by the clones, then that person is someone to talk to for sure." Lance stated.

Marik then pointed out. "We still need to get through these patrols. We know that half of these patrols are our guys, but the rest are real hardcore loyalists. And we can't force them to blow cover yet, since blaster fire can alert everyone in the vicinity."

"Leave them to us." Overlord said.

Boss was skeptical. "No offence, but the 6 of you against 26 well trained clones is hardly easy to take out." While he maybe a rogue, Boss knew that Clones are effective warriors, and are not to be so easily underestimated.

Overlord took out a strange device, as with the 5 other Spartans with him, and these devices expanded in shape. It was expanded outwardly, with a blue energy seemingly coursing through it. When it finally finished, it produced an arc shaped device with a string pulsating with blue energy connecting the two ends of the arc to each other. Kal and the other Mandalorians recognized the design.

"A Bow?" Walon asked incredulously.

"Don't judge a book by its cover, boys." Lance smirked. _They may think it looks stupid now, then wait what happens when bodies pile up._

"Move out." And they used their portable slipspace drives to teleport away from the stunned group. The assembled group in question and were in another state of shock. Freefalling Spartans, advanced weaponry and now teleporting armors? They all looked at Kal, who in turn had a very thoughtful look on his face.

Just what did I get my family into now?

* * *

><p>{2 hours later.}<p>

Clone Captain Zolt was patrolling the secret facility. He and 12 other clones were assigned to this duty, alongside 5 others, bringing the number to 60 clones patrolling it alone. Normally, this would be considered a waste of resources considering the amount of sheer manpower put into the patrol, plus the facility itself houses more than 2,000 troopers, half of which was from another company, Mantis Company, that recently came from the front lines to here. They had been recommended by the higher ups in command after a brutal and long fight with the Separatists after the war ended. To them it was a bit of R&R

But Zolt knew different. The facility held secrets. Powerful secrets, deadly secrets. Ones that could help the Republic gain an advantage over it's foes. But should it ever be breached, the secrets held here would be catastrophic to the Republic War Machine. Zolt and the rest of Jastis Company knew better than anyone.

Right now, he was patrolling the southern side, with the rest of his squad. After he finished, he went over to a nearby rock formation just 3 meters from the facility itself and he began a head count. And that's when he realized he was 3 men short.

"Where are they?" Zolt asked.

The clones looked at each other in confusion. Zolt was wishing he had his helmet off so he could rub his temples. They must have gotten lost or something. He checked in his comms but all he got was static. _Strange,_ Zolt thought.

"Alright, comms are down and we have 3 men missing. Nothing serious, but we need to get back double time, so we'll start looking for them. We'll split up into groups of two, to cover more ground. We meet back in this spot in 10. Move out."

Unknown to the group, their 3 comrades are currently pinned to the trees by sharp titanium arrows, their limbs swaying in the wind.

Maverick watched as the group split up. "Sir, enemy is beginning their search patterns. Permission to engage?"

To his right, Overlord slowly stood up and readied his bow, pulled on the string and before he let go of the string and let his arrow skewer the Clone officer in the lead, ordered:

"Execute."

****LONGEST CHAPTER IN MY WRITING LIFE EVER! I hope this lived up to your standards. This roughly took two weeks to finish.****

****Now to the Presentâ€¦ (Warning! The next scene takes some inspiration from Episode 20 of Star Wars the Clone Wars, Season 5 Finale).****

The Mirilian Nightingale.

{Glinn's Field, 10 hours after arrival, The Present}

Barris Offee was a rather shy individual. Say what you will about her being a great Jedi, her real talent comes in helping others heal. She was one to always put herself last and others first, a trait many marines noticed, and she earned the nickname: "The Mirilian Nightingale."

She was confused at first. She did not really understand what they meant, so she looked up the word "Nightingale" in a nearby Data pad. The name came from a social reformer in the 19th century named Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing. The similarities of her and this woman were uneasily similar, their own clothes matching the other.

She took this to stride and she was flinging herself in roles suited to her healer nature. Many doctors and nurses actually followed her lead, becoming effective in their roles even more under the direction of Barriss. Eventually, high command took notice and she was granted a part-time administrative role within the medical wards. She was content with the gratitude the UNSC gave her. But this was not her first time working with the UNSC.

She had been in the UNSC for months now. She had grown disillusioned over the Jedi and their ideals, and wanted to disappear and leave. She was approached by the CBMI, who had been monitoring Jedi activities ever since. She faked her death with their help and became a CBMI agent, making her the first Jedi to be a part of the intelligence bureau of the UNSC. She took up a healer role in some missions but also specialized in infiltration.

After the discovery of Order 66, she was shocked. She may have left the order, but the people she grew close were still important in her life. She was in the Reach when it came, shocking the Jedi who thought she was dead. Her former master was very pleased and happy of her survival and offered her the chance to come back. To her and the rest of the Jedi's shock, she refused.

Despite her still caring about the friends and family she left behind in the Order, she had grown to disillusioned to go back to its ranks, after all the pain and hypocrisy the Order had exposed her to. Master Yoda understood, but he did so with sadness. Many Council members realized that Barriss' leaving was due to their own arrogance and belief that they will prevail. In their pride, they had let many, including their own Jedi, suffer. Barriss then accused them of corruption, and unable to contain herself, left before an altercation could begin. The Council were shocked and many were outraged, but Master Yoda made them see the truth in Barriss's words. Even though she left the Order, she has made the one observation that even Master Yoda himself could not see: Corruption WAS in the Council and in turn, the Order itself. They convened and soon made many changes, and

most of the members went into meditation, contemplating on the faults they themselves have wrought. Barriss' own truth made them think deeply of their future, hoping that one day; they will reclaim what they lost in their blind arrogance.

Barriss, however, did not tell them of her assignment in the CBMI. She knew that the CBMI are secretive in nature and their actions are morally grey at best. Her first time working with them was tough on her ethical nature, but she soon told herself that it was a necessary evil. The violence she'd experience in the last 3 years has made her all but dull to the grey morality of the CBMI. She'd actually welcomed that fact. She'd also trained with the best to help her acquire skills only the CBMI could provide. She was their best non-human agent, despite her Jedi upbringing.

The first person to see her was her best friend, Ahsoka Tano. She was in stages of shock and joy, in that order, when she saw Barriss. Barriss was glad she saw Ahsoka, but did not tell her true allegiances.

Not yet, anyway.

Normally, Ahsoka would have bombarded her friend with questions about her survival, but the events that came after their rescue have severely drained her.

Right now, she was helping the wounded get their bearings and started to head over to the stock room to grab more towels, and bumped into someone.

Dennis "Gopher" Gostibule of Fireteam Gospel in Lost Legion has been in the medical bay ever since their arrival in the system. He and Wren of Fireteam Crimson work together to treat some wounds that the other doctors cannot find time to. He was more of the doctor, but his hacking skills are just as impressive. He often treats patients more than he shoots them. He was a rather competent hacker, but it is his ability to treat the wounded and his doctorate title made him the more medical based Spartan than most in Lost Legion.

He was on his way to the medical wards when he saw Barriss, or rather, when he bumped into her unexpectedly.

"Oops, sorry ma'am." Dennis apologized, and held his hand to her, which she accepted after pausing for a bit.

"My apologies, it was my fault. I was distracted for a moment there." Barriss said, but then she looked to the massive 6 foot tall soldier in front of her.

"Oh my!" She exclaimed. "Are you one of the Spartans?" Dennis nodded. "Yes, ma'am. And you must be the Mirilian Nightingale the men have been chatting about." Barriss nodded.

"Well, turns out that I need some assistance too. Mind helping me out deal with some injured Marines in the Room A2?" He offered.

"Very well, I'm done making rounds here." She said, and followed him to A2 for the less serious, but still wounded soldiers.

They went about the next few hours healing and caring for the

soldiers there. Despite his Spartan status, as a medic, he is bound to help the wounded first. He received a doctorate before enlisting in the military, meaning that amongst Spartans, he was the most caring and compassionate.

They spent the next 6 hours consoling, healing and helping the wounded and checking in on the recovery of those recently out of surgery. Afterwards, both exited the wards to take a break and Barriss wanted to take the chance to learn more on the TUG. She asked Dennis for assistance.

Despite her agent status in the CBMI, she had still a lot to learn.

"Sure, I would be glad to." Dennis answered. Barriss smiled in gratitude and both headed to one of the many info centers in the base.

* * *

><p>{Data Library 5, 15 minutes later}<p>

The Data library was filled with soldiers and Jedi, looking through the archives for different reasons. Barriss saw Master Stass Allie, a Tholothian Jedi, and another soldier conversing near a group of young padawans, presumably asking questions for directions.

Barriss headed over to some data terminals and began to download information to a data pad given to her by one of the Marines. She began to look over some data as Dennis began to access a nearby terminal to aid the Jedi in question.

A log in access was required, and Barriss used her identification codes to access them and more.

Dennis took a look at the log in registry. "Intelligence officer? Are you CBMI?"

They both sat down in a nearby table.

Barriss gave her explanation but as she kept on talking, her anger soon boiled over into her words. Dennis took notice.

"Yes. I joined them in exchange for helping me "leave" the Order. I could not stand the hypocrisy of the Order, the suffering brought about by the War, and worst of all, our roles in this entire war. We have always been a force for good, helping others in need and protecting them from the villainy of the galaxy. With the War, however, our involvement only makes things worse. And the most painful part of it is that the Council is corrupt. Let them prattle about their talks of peace and order in the galaxy. They are no more different than the politicians looking for their own interests. I was sick of it all. They started all of this." She fumed. Dennis grew concerned and sympathetic. People like the Council tend to push away good men and women.

"And you think joining the CBMI makes it better?" Dennis asked pointedly. "I know the Jedi are not the shining light you believe them to be after all this time, but are you so sure that joining CBMI will make it better. They may have helped you, but these

cloak-and-dagger spooks usually do things that would make right and wrong go upside down." Dennis warned.

"You think I do not know that?" Barriss asked, putting down the data pad she was holding to look at Dennis. She took off her hood, revealing a purple fabric holding her brown hair downwards.

"People who are in great positions, even the Jedi, fear to lose power. They may not notice it yet, but they secretly wish for this war to continue, The Senate, the Chancellor, and even the Jedi, are part of this evil that the Jedi have culminated. The Jedi have finally fallen from the Light, and into darkness. At least with the CBMI, they can look at it both ways without compromising itself. That I can count on. And I was right. The Republic HAS failed." Barriss said.

Dennis looked at her and said "I asked this to a friend once. I asked him "Why do men fall?" And he answered me "So that they can rise up." The Jedi are no saints, and their actions have caused the Republic to fall sway to some decrepit old crone in Coruscant, and your former home is now up in smoke, but the Jedi survived, and are learning from their mistakes. Take it from me, Barriss. People change, just give some time. You'll see." Dennis said.

Barriss looked thoughtful. "Perhaps. But not today."

Dennis brought his head down. He tried at least. But he could tell this is something for her to work out on her own. He wanted to say more, but his tacpad beeped. He was needed elsewhere. He stood up.

"I guess I should be going now. Nice talking to you, Barriss. I wish we can talk more in the future."

"And I as well." Barriss respectfully said, and Dennis turned, began walking and stopped, turning his head to Barriss' direction. "Don't lose yourself. Going down this road makes many men forget why they do this and at the end, become something less than what they are now. Don't forget." And with that done, he finally left. She had talked to a lot of people over the course of the week, but not at the level she did with Dennis. She did not know why, but maybe it was his demeanor that made her open up like she did.

Truthfully, this was the only time she talked her feeling out on all of this. She hoped that she would see Dennis again. Because not everyone understands her and why she does what she does.

Unlike her partner.

She heard a sound of rustling behind her. She reached out in the Force and knew who was behind her. The footsteps became audible with each passing step. Until a figure was directly behind her, and Barriss knew who was the person behind her.

"Master Luminara." She said stiffly, and she heard a sigh coming from behind her and Master Luminara Unduli stepped out of the shadows, her face a mask of worry and concern.

Despite her calm and serene demeanor, inwardly her emotions went berserk. She had been Barriss' master for years, and to hear news of

her passing hit her more than she admitted. Despite her strict adherence to Jedi code, she and Barriss grew close and saw each other as two best friends or sisters they could ever have. Barriss for all her cold demeanor, always saw Luminara as the sister she always wanted, same could be said for Luminara.

"I was unsure at first," Luminara said at last. "But now that I see for myself, I can accept it." She walked over to Barriss and hugged her, with Barriss hugging her back, after some hesitation. "You are alive! Thank the Force." Luminara said in a relieved tone. Barriss was glad her master felt happy, but these last few months have changed her.

"As am I, Master." Barriss smiled gently.

"Where have you been? How did you survive?" Luminara asked in an uncharacteristically small voice.

Barriss knew that she faked her death to leave the Order, and that it was needed to give her a fresh start, away from the horrors that plagued her for so long. But she could not tell her, not yet anyway.

"The UNSC saved me. That's all I can tell you for now" Barriss said. Luminara wanted to say more, but the pained look on Barriss' face (or the one she was putting up convincingly) told her to drop the subject for now.

"I must inform the masters about this." Luminara said, but Barriss held her hand, stopping her.

"What's wrong?" Luminara asked. Barriss looked at her.

"I already told them. And I'm also not going back to the Order." Barriss declared, which sent her master into a state of shock and confusion.

"What are you talking about?" Luminara asked.

"I joined the UNSC in those months you thought I was dead. Because I was grew weary of our fight. We used to be a force for good, Master. These last 3 years have drained all that away to something much more sinister, much darker. I saw how much we have become so close to the dark side and I could not stay any longer if that was the case." Barriss explained.

Luminara was speechless. All her life, she'd known that Barriss was the most loyal and steadfast of the Jedi. To see her practically telling to her face that the order had failed in their duties.

After giving it a lot of thought, Luminara spoke up.

"We have made mistakes. I will not lie. The Order has made many monumental mistakes. Ones that nearly destroyed us." Luminara said, putting her hand on Barriss' shoulder.

"But the UNSC have given us a second chance, Barriss. Can you not see that? Everything we have lost has cut us deep to the core, but now, we can start over, begin to regain the galaxy's trust. Ensure that this does not happen again. So please, come back to us. The Order

needs good people right now." Luminara pleaded. Barriss was touched, really. While she was extremely tempted to do so, the wounds and pain she felt before this had cut way too deep, something that even her master can't heal entirely.

"As much as I want to," Barriss started "I cannot simply forget the pain I have been dealt with. Not now master, maybe, but not now. I'm sorry." Barriss said her head down and her eyes closed tightly.

Luminara was saddened, but understood. Her former padawan was injured in a more ways a physical wound could. She understood. She got her point across anyway, so all she could do is hope to the Force that her former padawan can manage herself for the time being, and Luminara will be there to help. Until Barriss can return, all Luminara could do was support her former apprentice.

Luminara sighed. "It seems you are still set on this path. Very well, I will not stop you. I hope that you do return to the Order someday. May the Force be with you."

"And with you as well." Barriss returned the greeting, and Luminara turned around stiffly and left. Even though she looked okay, if one reached out into the Force, one could tell that she was sad that her apprentice would not come back. Barriss knew this would be painful, she knew this would happen when she met her master. She only hoped that she would tell her of her true allegiances someday, but like before, she would not tell them now.

A cloaked figure slowly walked beside her. "How much did you hear?" Barriss asked.

"Just enough." The cloaked figure shrugged. "I figured that you and your master need some room. Besides, you didn't tell her, so me being here would make her ask questions and throw lightsabers in equal measure."

"She would understand. But I'm more surprised that you'd actually give consideration for me. Back then, you even tried to kill me and her, but now, I think you've changed a bit too much." Barriss commented.

"So have you." The figure retorted. Barriss nodded. She knew why she was here.

"Have we been called?" Barriss asked. The figure nodded simply.

"Then let us depart." Barriss said, putting her cloak back on walking in the opposite direction. The figure turned her head and allowed the light to shine through, revealing a rather albino looking woman with slight tattoos on her face and her head was bald.

"Yes, lets." Agreed Asajj Ventress. And they left, leaving only the wind as their witness.

****WOAH! Did you see that coming or no? Tell me how I did, I took some inspiration from the Season 5 finale "The Wrong Jedi." I have also created a poll in my account, so please check it out.****

****Barriss is a CBMI agent here, alongside Ventress, because those two**

are now going dark, and what better way to be dark than by becoming part of a very cloak-and-dagger agency dedicated to protecting the Andromeda and the UNSC.**

****AND KUDOS TO UH-60 NIGHTSTALKER ON HELPING ME OUT ON THIS BARRISS CHAPTER. I appreciate the help. ****

Reply and Review.

5. Episode 5

This will primarily focus on the Skirata clan, before and after the Exile of the Jedi Order.

Also, point out to me if I'm repeating some words or phrases here. I'm working against the timetable and I can't seem to pinpoint the source of the repeats according to one reviewer.

Episode 5: Mhi ba'juri verde.

{Kashyyyk, The Past}

The wind was calm and serene, the branches fluttered to the wind's tune, and the leaves around the trees danced to the rhythm of the wind. A serene scene that the Clones were silently appreciating, as they searched for their missing comrades.

And it was such a scene that was shattered when a sharp fast object pierced Captain Zolt's throat and pinned him to a nearby tree bark, shocking everyone present. The Clones began to frantically search their surroundings for their hidden enemy, and unfortunately, they struck.

Clones dropped faster than flies, one clone got 3 sticks pointing out of his chest, with one embedding itself to his head and splattering brain matter over his compatriot, who panicked and opened fire.

Another clone got stuck to the tree, pinned to it by a metal object sticking in his abdomen, posing like a macabre doll in a gift shop.

Two of them stuck together back to back; as they hoped that they would prove more effective sticking together like that. That was the case as a bolt pierced through both of them not only killing them but were both lodged to a nearby tree bark.

Laser bolts flew everywhere but in the panic did not even come close to hitting the assailants who struck from the shadows. The only purpose the lasers did was providing a rather disjointed light show. They struck trees, leaves and the occasional wildlife, but they did not hit the shadows that seemed to stalk them. The enemy attacked from everywhere, as bolts came from not only in the shadows below, but some came from the branches above.

The panic was evident in the Clones' voices as they struggled to maintain order.

"What was that?" One clone frantically asked.

"Return fire!" Another one shouted.

"Get HQ on the comms! Tell them-GAK!" A clone said as he was cut off by an incoming bolt into his right eye.

"Regroup everyone!"

"We're being slaughtered!"

"Keep firing!"

"Fall Back!"

It was chaos, and one by one, the clones fell. One clone tried to use a thermal detonator, but the same death-dealing sticks that struck the clones down, struck this clone in the hand, with the clone screaming in pain, and accidentally activating the detonator, which exploded after a few seconds and took 3 nearby clones in the blast.

One last clone was standing. And all of his training flushed from his head to bring to surface the bubbling terror he was experiencing. His gun shook erratically, his breathing increased, his stance conveyed the feeling of terror the clone was experiencing.

An animal was cornered, and Commander Escandor cornered his prey, with Maverick and Lightning covering him from the branches above. Lady and the rest of Crimson were dispatched to deal with the other patrol that were not in Kal's little group of rogues. Their "hosts" were watching from a high vantage point above to survey the battle. So far, most of them were hypnotized at how these warriors moved. They walked like lumbering giants, but their results were akin to silent killer, undetectable and totally quiet.

Overlord was still in hiding and began to send to arrows down the last clones' way. He struck at the knee first, which drove the Clone to his knee, and then struck three more arrows into his chest before using a delayed explosive arrow to shoot him in the head, and detonating a short time after impact, beheading the hapless Clone.

Lightning seemed to notice how much ammo was used on just one clone and remarked, "A bit of too much overkill, ain't it Commander?"

Overlord smirked "One can never be too sure, so I made doubly sure of that."

Maverick sighed. "For the record, the arrow in the knee jokes got old 500 years ago."

Overlord turned to glare at the Spartan sniper "You never appreciated classics, Soren."

"Because they got too repetitive!" Maverick snapped.

"Are not!"

"Are too!"

"Are not!"

Lightning watched with amusement at this banter. Despite their ranks, they were the closest thing to family in the Legion. Their ranks were simple formalities to them. They were all brothers and sisters, and some are closer to others than most. Lightning could only pray that they survive this, and all other battles in the Andromeda.

Lightning decided to end this before it devolved any further to name calling. "Alright guys, we need to focus on the mission here." He reminded. Overlord and Maverick both sighed and stared at each other for awhile. Lightning knew those looks and he groaned.

They'd continue this after their mission.

* * *

><p>{2 minutes laterâ€|}<p>

"Fierfek!" Kal muttered softly as he and his clan surveyed the battle field. It was littered with body parts and skewered corpses everywhere.

The rest of the clan were either in a state of a silent shock, like Darman and Boss, or swore rather loudly, like Fi, Corr, and Scorch. They were severely underestimating the Spartans' ability. They were flabbergasted that these beings that moved like lumbering Droidekas moved with such speed and silence. They saw the battle in the distance and they were in muted shock when they systematically took out a Clone patrol out with ease.

They took note in the future not to underestimate their skills.

Darman knew that standard Clones are no feeble warriors, Darman can attest to that. But to see them get killed like animals killed by Hunters.

Hunters. A rather apt description for these Spartans, at least, to Kal and Darman.

Overlord approached them, or rather, materialized in front of them. His suit had cloaking tech installed, much more energy efficient and longer lasting. Everyone except Kal and Walon jumped. The Clones quickly regained their postures.

"I'm assuming you enjoyed our little display of force?" Overlord asked in a smug tone.

Kal did his best not to look too distracted by the scene around him. Despite his Mandalorian upbringing, the way these Clones were dispatched was a bit too savage in his opinion. As a Mandalorian, he knows a warrior must use everything in his arsenal to defeat the foe. It was a way of saying that the warrior is strong enough to be worthy of a Mandalorian using all of his weapons to take his foe down. To hold back is the same thing as saying that someone is not worthy to fight a Mandalorian. The Spartans seem to know this too, but this seemed rather excessive.

Nevertheless, they fought like their namesake, and he was impressed at these Spartans. Maybe when this is all over, he could induct them in as honorary Mandalorians. After all, they already got the armor.

"Very impressive." Kal said. "A bit too much, but I think you got made a point."

"Don't you think the blaster fire was not supposed to happen?" Atin asked.

Lady answered. "Don't worry; we led them here specifically where the wind was lowest so that the blaster fire shots are heard lowest. By the time the other group hears it, they'll be next, and your boys can get ready to take the facility on your go."

"I just hope that you have other arrows aside from the pointy sticks that are your current ammo choice?" Kal asked, looking at the differently designed arrows in his quiver.

"Astute of you, huh?" Overlord said, and then his tone became serious. "I suggest you start giving the signal now. Dawn is coming and we can't stay for long. Our boys maybe giving hell to the Chancellor in Coruscant, but's only a matter of time before they turn their attention to us."

Admiral Morrison was in charge of Lost Legion's deployment, but direct operations commands come from Lt. Roberts for the time being. Admiral Morrison had recently contacted Overlord to tell them that the Reach would be inbound in a few hours and that he needed to wrap this up fast.

Kal nodded and began to hail the commander of Mantis Company. Darman simply stared at the Spartans. For the first time in their lives, they may have found an ally that overshadows even their Mandalorian tutors. It was a bit overwhelming to be honest. Darman was starting to wonder if his family was okay.

He pushed those thoughts aside, knowing they would distract him from his mission. The sooner he got this done, the better.

Unfortunately, at that moment, another battle was about to erupt high above Kashyyyk's atmosphere.

* * *

><p>{Kashyyyk Upper Atmosphere, 1 hour after ground ambush}<p>

Captain Mends and The Mandalorian Captain were exchanging notes in regards to battle strategies. After being convinced by Marik, Captain Mako Singrap of the Prosecutor then worked closely with Mends, discussing strategies in case of an enemy fleet appearing and their evacuation strategies. He informed Mends that some Rogue Clones would help evacuate some Jedi not in the Temple or even in the Outer Rim and could call upon them for aid. So far, 3 rogue fleets answered the call, as they were in nearby star systems evacuating Jedi stuck on those worlds. Jedi Knights Robert Lee and John Cypher were amongst those Jedi.

Robert Lee had a sister, Jade, who was reported missing by Commander Trips of the 247th Hades Corps. He was still uninformed about the news when Singrap decided he'd be the one to tell him. Singrap had only heard the news from Trips as he and his men crossed into the UNSC space, still unsure and unable to track her, and he thought that she might be with his brother in Nar Shaddaa. He was put into a very difficult position.

As he was doing that, Mends ordered a cross-reference to the facility they were raiding with Jade Lee. Slight references of her in some articles, but the real meat of the info lied with a manifest written by the Chancellor himself ordering that certain Jedi are to "disappear" and be used in experiments concerning midi-Chlorians. Mends was still unclear what that meant, but traces of the list fed back to the facility in Kashyyyk. He'd have to inform Lance as soon as he'd confirm with more info.

Then, the alert system kicked up, and everyone was up in arms.

A bridge officer aboard the Dark Suffering reported in. "Sir! We got unidentified contacts! Estimates show 5 bogeys, 6 Acclamator class and 4 Venator Class Warships inbound, sir!"

Mends grimaced. "They must be here in response to the communications block we established over the planet. Have they detected us yet?"

"No sir!" The bridge ensign said, earning the collective sigh of relief. Despite their advanced shielding and weaponry, the crew did not want to fight directly as it may turn out badly. The fact that they still retained their cloaking was a relief to everyone.

"Sir, the Prosecutor is hailing us." A female officer said, and brought up the link.

"Captain Singrap, how's the situation looking?"

Singrap cleared his throat. "It's looking rather decent, considering the Republic could have sent a larger force. They must be tied up fighting your boys other parts." Mends rolled his eyes. Leave it to a Mandalorian to say that 10 ships against 2 is good odds. If he didn't know better, the Mandalorians could be distinctively related to the Sangheili.

Mends grinned. "That's true."

"We have our boys hiding behind one of the moons, away from sensor range. We have some element of surprise in case things get hairy. I understand you have some tricks of your own, Terran?" The Mandalorian captain asked.

"Wait a moment." Mends turned to his requisitions officer. "Do we have any stealth mines?"

"Yes sir. A full armament, nuclear and EMP." The requisitions officer said. Mends grinned, and then turned to his compatriot.

"Captain Singrap, when will those ships get into firing range?" Asked Mends.

"20 minutes at this speed. Why?" Singrap asked.

"We have some surprises of our own. Distract them. Give us 15 minutes to set up." And with that Mends cut the link.

Sasha came back and looked at the slowly advancing Republic Fleet.
"What's the situation?"

Singrap updated her on the situation, and then asked her. "Where have you been?"

Sasha looked behind and saw Roman and Revy catch up. "Let's just say that Roman told us a rather fascinating story on our friends." Sasha said.

"I see." Singrap remarked, dropping the subject to give orders to his crew. "Let us hope the Terrans know what they are doing."

Sasha looked at him and said, "If Roman's story is true, I think we'll get out of this easy."

"What makes you so sure? It ain't very Mandalorian to declare a battle won before it started." Singrap pointed out.

"Let's just say the Terrans are more like us than you think." Sasha grinned.

* * *

><p>{Kashyyyk, 5 minutes later.}<p>

Overlord got the news about the incoming fleet and informed Skirata on the situation involved.

"I assume you have contingencies in place?" Kal asked.

"Yes. Yes I do." Overlord claimed, and began to establish an uplink with Outlaw.

* * *

><p>{Trandosha base}<p>

"Outlaw, this is Overlord. Do you copy?" Hot Rod's tacpad toned.

Outlaw had been staying for the past few hours, downloading data, checking weapons or just hanging around. Sev, meanwhile, was working on some of the sniper rifles given to him by White. Although they could not find his weapons, he was given some of the sniper rifles from the Pelican, alongside a spare Battle Rifle. Although Sev was concerned about using slug-throwers, he test tried one on a Trandosha corpse and he began to warm up to it. He and Hot Rod were in a middle of a sniper challenge when Overlord called.

"Overlord, this is Hot Rod. Outlaw is on station and ready to assist, over." The team, plus Sev, stood up.

"Hot Rod, we are approaching the complex now. We just got word that things are about to get hairy soon. Recommend you rendezvous with us

in the facility ASAP."

"Roger that." And closed the link. Hot Rod then turned to his assembled group.

"Alright people, Listen up. Overlord's recalling Outlaw to his location. Everyone, grab whatever ain't bolted to the ground and move out!" Everyone swarmed to their positions or began to grab useful intel and gear into the Pelicans. There were 4 of them outside, each with their own pilot.

White got a spare ODST helmet and threw it to Sev, who caught it deftly. "I think that can serve as a good helmet, don't you think so?" She asked.

Sev grunted. "Almost, just needs a little more touch." And he used a small blade to cut his hand and allowed the blood to flow, and after awhile, clapped his hands together.

Wizard was flabbergasted. "What was that for?"

Sev smirked at the Spartan medic. "A little personal touch." And he smeared his helmet with the bloodied hand.

Circus grinned. "Nice fashion statement, bro. Blood red is all the craze with the youth of today." He then smirked.

Sev gave one of his own. "Now this is MY helmet." And with that, he put it on, with the HUD compensating the Blood on his visor to allow him to see through the blood that was smeared on the visor of the Helmet. He'd never say it out loud, but he wished he had the Spartans' armor. The way it automatically assembled and disassembled itself served with function and Sev liked it. He will ask for that armor some other time in the future, if he got the chance.

It looked a bit gaudy; a green helmet over a red and white colored armor, but Sev was fine with it. He'd find the armor to match the colors anyway.

Hot Rod looked over to his team. "All set?" 5 heads nodded in response.

"Then," Hot Rod began, with his helmet automatically assembling over his head. "Let's get started, people."

* * *

><p>{Kashyyyk, 15 minutes later, Above the planet.}<p>

"Captain Singrap, we are being hailed!" A Mandalorian bridge officer in battle armor reported.

"Show onscreen." The captain ordered, with Roman, Revy and Sasha standing next to him.

A man in 40s showed up on screen. He was wearing a Republic Officer Uniform. "This is Captain Sen Orri of the 56th Patrol Brigade. To the Ne'tra Kad Warship Prosecutor, State your intentions for the time being or be fired upon." Orri demanded.

"This is Captain Singrap of the Ne'tra Kad. We are here to negotiate an agreement with the Wookiees. I our business is our own, and I hope to the Republic even they can respect the boundaries of our group and your government." Singrap said.

"Then if this is a personal matter, why is it that all communications coming to and from the planet have been cut off ever since your people got here?" Orri asked in a demeaning tone. Singrap grit his teeth. _For a Republic Captain, he sure acts like a Neimoidan._

"Hell if I know!" Singrap snapped "We've been trying to get communications from the Planet below but I only get static. The only thing working is ship to ship communications, like the one we're having now! Hell, we can't even find our people down there." He bluffed, hoping the Republic captain is as gullible as he looks.

He was not, unfortunately.

"If you are so sure of that, then why am I detecting a signal between you and an IFF tag located near a Republic Facility and your ship just happened to be orbiting above on accident?" The Republic captain said in a snarky tone.

Singrap had a façade of neutrality that was balanced out by the inward panic he was now feeling. They must have very good scanners on their ships. He hoped that Mends' plan worked or everything gets blown out of the water. He was still flabbergasted as to why they were able to detect the IFF tags of Marik if the Terrans jammed the entire planet.

Meanwhile, Mends was slightly disappointed the Captain did not take the bait. His jammers were the most advanced in the UNSC, and also the most experimental, so he knew the risks when he allowed experimental equipment onboard his ship. He quickly learned that while his new toy could block out communications, anything else, like ID tags or radiation spikes couldn't.

As the Republic Captain was now resorting to threats, The UNSC Dark Suffering planted his mines in close proximity to the ships, with Nuclear near the Venators, and EMP near the Acclamators. Mends is aware that the Republic might have something up their sleeves and was cautious.

No matter, the trap was set. All that was needed was for the Captain to simply realize it. But what Mends did not know is that these particular ships are outfitted with the brand new Ion cannons, and it was going to be a very close call to the Prosecutor as the next few minutes occur in a blur.

"Very well." Orri said in a tone of finality. "If you will not come clean with us, then you can deal with our troopers then." And with that he cut the link.

Roman looked at Singrap with worry. They seem to be saying silently, _this is about to get nasty_.

And it did, as two Venators suddenly discharged bolts of blue light at the Prosecutor.

"Sir, we got incoming!" A bridge officer alerted. Singrap immediately took action.

"Evasive Manuevers!" He ordered, but as soon as he did, the bolts hit the ship dead on, and suddenly all power in the bridge was out, save for life support.

"Status!" The Mandalorian captain ordered. A female ensign responded. "Sir, we lost power in all systems, except for life support, thankfully. Weapons systems are down, comms are down, but we can still get those back up in a few minutes."

"Damn." Singrap calmly. Despite the chaos, he had to keep his cool or the order that was starting to crumble in his ship would degrade rapidly. Revy and Sasha are trying to restore comms, while Roman volunteered to lead the Mandalorians in the event of a boarding party.

On the main Republic ship, Current, Captain Orri smiled. He was now assured that the new and experimental Ion cannons built into the ship was a success. All he needed to do now was to send in his troopers and secure the facility which built them in the first place. Just as he did however, a voice was heard in the bridge.

"I wouldn't do that if I was you." An electronic voiced echoed throughout the bridge. The Captain literally jumped. "Identify yourself!" He snarled, and the voice merely laughed.

"Did you really think the Mandalorians would come here alone?" The voice asked in a tone that one could describe as arrogant. "Now I think this is a time for you to surrender, don't you think?"

"You fool! We have already disabled your allies' ship and we are already ready for any surprises you have in store, which is to say you have none!" The Captain smirked.

Personally, Mends thought this guy has a serious ego problem, since if he and his crew checked the databases more closely, they could have already have known that they are being hacked like a worm eating through an apple. He used the voice distorter to cover his voice. "Well, so says the captain whose ship is right in the back of the crowd. What's the matter? You fear death? Does it scare you?" He taunted. Orri fumed. His pride was larger than the ship he served on.

"Show yourself coward!" Orri spat that last word out.

"Very well, I give you one last chance to surrender." Mends warned.

"Fat Chance in Sith hell, coward!" Orri called him out.

Mends sighed. As much as he wanted minor bloodshed, combat was unavoidable, especially since he knows that a weapon on the Republic's side would do major damage to the UNSC, unless they were recovered. The Ship AI, Noble, a Spartan AI based off a fallen Spartan from the old Human-Covenant war, has informed the captain that all information pertaining to the weapon used against the Prosecutor and its functions and limitations were now in its database, alongside the location of the place where the weapons

originated. Interestingly, it leads to the same area where the operation took place.

The Dark Suffering was currently at a minimum safe distance, yet close enough to formulate a firing solution on a nearby Acclamator, with Archer rocket pods locked onto the bridges of two other Acclamators.

Mends would have to think on it later. Taking a deep breath, he said to the Captain onboard the main Venator ship. "Well, I think you are going to find that out yourself." And he activated the mines.

Orri was about to respond when he saw a red light right outside the bridge, the entire crew looked on in fascination, until it uncloaked and revealed to be a small spherical device with a skull sign in the front.

"Oh, Son of a-"were the last words the captain muttered before a bright light consumed the ship.

All at once, Nuclear mines detonated simultaneously with the EMP, doing its job of softening the Acclamators and destroying any Venators. The explosions literally shone like the sun as the bright light consumed the Venators, sometimes getting some Acclamators caught in the blast radius and the EMPs, did their job of shutting down the smaller ships, leaving them prey to the Dark Suffering.

The UNSC frigate fired on the bridge of one Acclamator, sending it in flames before a chain reaction detonated the ship like a massive fireworks display. The Rocket pods also blew apart some Acclamators' hulls, with only a few rockets getting to the bridge and destroying the ships entirely.

Ne'tra Kad's reinforcements came, as they jumped as soon as the signal was given by Mends, and began to lay waste to all of the remaining forces. Their turbolaser ripping into the Acclamators as they began to explode.

Mends was grinning. His plan was a success, but that would not last.

A nearby Acclamator exploded, but it did so in a way akin to a Fragmentation grenade. As soon as the fusion reactor went into supernova, it blew the ship apart in a rather violent manner, sending debris everywhere, with the largest chunks heading straight for the Dark Suffering.

"Evasive maneuvers!" Mends ordered on instinct. What he should have done was activate his Slipspace drive to get him out of there, and now it came back to bite him in the ass.

They were able to evade most of it, but smaller chunks pelted on the ship like machine gun fire. The speed and volume of the debris were draining the shields rapidly.

By the time they were able to get out, they were already at an alarming 5% shield capacity. They were just about to be in the clear when a small section of durasteel came at speeds enough to outrun 3 speeding bullets combined and punched through the shield and armor and it came to hit the engine room, sending sparks flying around and

hit the slipspace generators.

The damage causes a small tremor that shook the entire ship. Even it was strong in the chair where the captain was sitting at the time. "Status!" Mends yelled.

"We got reports that there is some damage sustained the engine room! Engineers are assessing the damage now!" An ensign reported.

A few minutes later, he got the results. There was damage in the Slipspace drives, but they can be fixed. The Problem was their Shadowspear core, which was ruptured but ironically prevented the Slipspace drive from being punctured completely. Mends frowned on that bit of info. He lost his experimental drive core but it was negligible. It did its job well.

Mends slumped back into his command seat. His plan was a success, but it was still too soon if the costs were worth it. Now all he had to do was wait for Overlord to do his job right. Hopefully his mission was going smoothly

* * *

><p>{Kashyyyk, Secret Republic Research Outpost, 5 minutes later}<p>

Things went smoothly for about 10 minutes until all hell broke loose.

Not only did Mantis Company do its job of letting the joint Mandalorian/Spartan team in, they somehow were able to get elements of the defending clones to defect as well. But about 560 of them defected; the rest did not on the account that their commanding officers convinced their underlings that Mantis Company have gone AWOL and everyone started blasting each other in a matter of seconds. Lance quickly divided his force to scour out any resistance being given by the Clones that remained.

The group led by Kal, Walon, Atin and Scorch have gone to different parts of the facility to quell the loyalists, with Wrecker and Maverick, Fi, Corr, and Fixer have gone with Lady to take the systems in the main network facilities on the eastern side, and Overlord and Wren are with Darman, Boss and Marik are heading towards the more secure northern area where the main research facilities are still held in Clone control.

2 minutes into the assault, Lady and Katrina finally hacked the central datacore and downloaded schematics of the compound to the Overlord and Wren.

Overlord split his team into 2: Wren and Darman are to cut straight to the holding facilities where Ko Sai and additional prisoners were kept, while he, Marik and Boss are going to eliminate any major threats and divert all attention from the two to them.

Lance used his Suppressor to take a few clones out and send the rest into cover while Boss and Marik flanked the Clones and wiped them out as they began to fire on Overlord's position. Lance then told Marik to flush them out as Boss will provide sniper support from the top. After a few minutes of mayhem, Commandoes started showing up. Boss

and Marik then dove into cover, the latter taking a blaster bolt to the arm, and Boss' shields being drained. Overlord decided to deal with this, and activated his Plasma Sword in his right hand and a brand new weapon in his left.

It was something he was working on ever since the Jedi were discovered. Many Spartans realized that while their combat prowess was legendary, even they had to respect the Jedi's abilities in fighting, especially in lightsaber combat. Lance himself requested a brand new energy weapon as they found out that while the energy sword had a better width, reach and power, it lacked finesse and accuracy. He suggested to create a weapon using Hardlight tech, allowing it to maintain the power of the Energy Sword with the accuracy befitting a light saber. It took more than 5 years, but finally, the Z-756 Hardlight CQC weapon was finally ready for service, with the prototype available only to Overlord for the moment.

The main feature of the weapon is that it can change shape, from axe, to sword, to even a Hardlight shield, this weapon is designed as an answer to the threat of lightsabers posed by Force Users.

Right now though, it'll have to settle on some Clone Commandoes.

The Commandoes paused for awhile, then some of them began to fire on Marik and Boss, as 3 others began to take their electro staffs and charged at Lance.

Smiling, Lance began to charge as well, activating the CQC Weapon and using the Katana form. Just before the Clones began to throw the first strike, Lance slid under the first one and used the Plasma sword to bisect him in half as the two other clones began to attack simultaneously, hoping to overwhelm him. But Spartans are trained to fight multiple enemies, with this one no different than his sessions in CQC.

Looking as though he was using no amount of effort, Lance began to block both Clones and still maintain his ground. Both Commandoes were pushed back and one of them tried to use rapid strikes on the Spartan, but Lance countered them both with his Katana, and used his Plasma sword to use in offensive, stabbing and slashing any weak spots in the defenses of the Commandoes.

Eventually, Lance saw an opening and used his plasma sword to do a feint to which the Commando fell for and left his left side open for the Katana to slice off the arm of the Commando, with said Commando clutching his shoulder in pain. Then Lance used both his swords to slash and hack the Commando in rapid and fluid motion, ending it when he decapitated the Commando, with him falling to smoking pieces right after.

The Last Commando was now on the defensive, with Lance going on a rapid offensive and beating him down until Lance used the Plasma Sword to destroy the weapon, and the Katana to end the Clone by impaling him and then activating a thermal detonator on his belt. Lance then tossed the dying Clone into his comrades, who were then caught in the blast radius and wiped them out.

Marik and Boss then regrouped with Overlord, who was beginning to wonder if his plan was working well. Shrugging his doubts, he switched back to his Lightrifle, and began to head to over to more

hostile areas, Marik and Boss following his lead.

And unknown to him, it was working, as Wren and Darman managed to slip through unseen, slipping into an elevator and heading down. As Lance began to take his Lightrifle and began picking off targets and sometimes turning them to ash, his compatriots are in a slight state of disbelief. They shook it off when bolts came flying over their heads.

There would be enough time to get an explanation later.

One level below and Wren and Darman slowly moved from the elevator with Wren's Suppressor and Darman's DC-17 rifle on ready.

Darman was suspicious about the silence. Normally, this would translate to trap. To relieve his growing tension, he began to strike a conversation with Wren. Also, he wanted to gauge his just who this Lance is. And judging by the way he acts around this particular Spartan, he might get more answers from her.

They were in a long corridor, so while they were heading down, Darman took this time to talk.

"So, how close are you to your leader?" Darman asked, not beating around the bush. Etain once accused him of being rather blunt in the more intimate sides of life.

"Trying to get in my armor?" Wren asked teasingly.

"You seem rather close, even for warriors as capable as you."

"Giving a girl a compliment? My, my, aren't we flirty? Your wife won't like that."

"I'm trying to understand what kind of person is Overlord? Is sounds like a troublemaker and less than a seasoned soldier."

Wren pursed her lips. "Lance, is, well complicated. He is a sweet guy. He doesn't treat me any better than the others, and I love him for it. He always achieves to bring some balance in his life, and he never, ever tolerates people who commit bad things. He may be Spartan, and a real softy."

Darman smiled, despite himself, "Doesn't sound too bad."

"That was after he left the Headhunters. If you don't know, they are the CBMI's scalpel in removing "tumors" over the UNSC." She said it with uneasiness

"Assassins?" Darman asked. Wren nodded.

"He was, different, then. Trust me when I say that Lance is a two sided coin, tossed in a flick of a hat. That was just his good side you saw." Wren said.

Darman felt more intrigued. "Then what's his bad side?"

Wren was about to answer, when they reached the door. "Later." She said. Darman nodded. There would be time for talking soon.

They entered inside a dimly lit room, with only the consoles on the table nearby being the only light. Wren then stormed to a nearby console and activated her TACPAD.

"Activating Data Sifters, going in their databases right now. This should not take too long. Annnddd accessingâ€¦ now." Wren said, and activated the console, turning the lights on. What they found shocked them.

(AN: This part might be a bit extreme)

There was a large machine over in the center of the room, it seemed to generate blue energy down on a table below, and it was no simple table.

They saw an operating table, with an occupant lying on it. It was a human, female by the looks of it. She had dark-brown shoulder-length hair. She was naked from the waist up, her midsection cut open, and her insides clearly visible. And the worst part was that her lower half was some parts of clothing.

Clothing that only Jedi are able to wear.

Wren and Darman quickly headed down stairs, with Wren giving out a priority message to Rei to tell Overlord to head over their positions. Darman checked over her, and gave a sad sigh.

Wren looked over, and began to tinker with the consoles nearby. Inwardly, she was disgusted. Even guinea pigs were given better dignity than this.

"Oh, Jade." He muttered. He knew Commander Jade Lee over a few tours in Separatist space. He also knew that she and CT-7263, or Trips, Commander of the 247th Hades Corps were very close. To think that she's here and like thisâ€¦

He just did not want to tell Trips this. Anything but this. To know that his Jedi warrior is now a cut up lab-ratâ€¦

Anger now began to boil. He then turned his head towards the infernal machine that he, in his rage, believed to be the contraption that ended this Jedi's life. He was angry because how much Trips and Jade loved each other, like he and Etain, but now it seems as though the Force have took her away. And he hated it. Just as he raised his gun to fire, Wren took it.

"What are you doing?!" Wren hissed. Darman glared at her.

"I'm gonna send this thing that was used to kill Jade and turn it into scrap metal, that's what!" Darman snapped. He was angry something so inanimate was the cause for destroying someone so strong and independent like Jade.

"This THING is also used to keep her alive." Wren snapped, to which Darman gaped. "What?!"

"Whatever this thing is, it has something to do with stasis and midi-chlorians." Wren explained slowly. "I found some notes pertaining to using stasis to prevent near death situations, and this

seems to be the prototype." Wren said. Stasis in the Andromeda has often been used to bind prisoners and has often been used in some medical emergencies, but stasis had limitations. It could not halt life-threatening injuries since it could only slow down body functions. As a medic, Wren could appreciate a machine that can halt even the most grievous of wounds indefinitely, but not when it is used on people who were purposely harmed just for the sole purpose of testing it.

"She seems to be stable and sedated too. But they're starting to wear off." Wren noted as she saw the Jedi slowly moving her hands. Darman was sickened a bit when he saw her insides moving as though they were still normal.

"Who authorized this?" Darman said through gritted teeth. This whole scenario has upset him greatly.

"Take a guess." Wren said grimly.

Palpatine Darman thought as he clenched his hands. Who else would do it?

"They could have used anyone." Darman said as though talking had become a difficulty. "Why a Jedi?"

Wren grimaced under her helmet. "They tried it out on non-Force users. They did not last long; in fact, the whole reason they built a testing facility here was because of the Wookiees. They were strong and durable, but apparently not enough." Darman was sick to his stomach.

"What else is there?" Darman asked, quickly to change the topic. They needed to help Jade first, but unless they know how to, they need to find some more info on who can help."

"Some energy weapon pertaining to an "Ion Cannon." According to schematics from that console, this was designed to turn off systems in a ship or a planetary fortress or a space station." Wren detailed. She seemed rather calm, but that only served to make Darman rather impatient.

"We can deal with that later; right now we need to help Jade. NOW!" Darman raised his voice.

Wren pursed her lips and began to type furiously on her TACPAD. She had the data anyways, so the only thing she needed right now was a medical team.

"Ok, I got it! We need the help of the Jedi, since they might know a thing or two about healing."

"Who else is there aside from them?"

"A Kaminoan scientist. I think you know a person named Ko Sai?"

Darman's eyes widened. He was there with Kal when he asked for her aid to help the aging process of the Clones. He wondered briefly if she was in charge of this debacle. Did she forego her deal with Kal to do this sick experiment? Was she forced or is this really her

doing?

Darman looked at Jade. "How long does she have?"

Wren sighed. "The good news is that the machine that is keeping her alive is keeping her stable. I'm gonna need the good doctor's help before I can patch her up. I don't doubt my skills, but if I'm gonna do this right, I need some more medics in here, and that doctor is, God help me, worth ten of me at this point, in terms of medical expertise." She said.

Darman grimaced even more. "I don't know. Me and Kal trusted her to help us, and she's doing this Rancor of an experiment. What makes you think she'll come to us willingly and help us out?"

"Well, I don't but we have to take a chance. Now HURRY and get that Kaminoan out of there. We might not have a lot of time left!" Wren pressured on Darman.

Darman shook his head as he walked towards the Holding cells. He had to get the Kaminoan out fast if Jade is going to live a bit longer.

* * *

><p>{Holding cells}<p>

The Clone Commando Darman didn't take too long to get in.

He did bring in those breaching charges, so it did not take much for the doors to allow him access. And he was not disappointed in what he found.

Aside from the Jedi, he also found Ko Sai. The Kaminoan scientist was trembling, her eyes seemed bruised and her long neck had scratches all over. Darman now realized that she is also a victim of the Republic he swore to serve. Darman clenched his weapon harder. When this was all over, he was going to make whoever did this pay, Palpatine or otherwise. He helped her up, but with some difficulty as Ko did not recognize Darman at first. When he explained the situation in a rapid tone, Ko agreed as she did not want her to die. She helped the scientists here at gunpoint by the Clones, who told her that she was "recruited" to assist in some rather devious experiments.

Those experiments made Ko very sad as she was forced to terminate Wookiees when they expired. She was torn up just by doing this. She also explained that tried to sneak out, but to no avail, and kept her here with the Jedi as well. She saw Jade being wheeled in to the experimentation room and heard screams from the other side, distressing the Jedi inside the cells. Apparently the bastards that did this never applied any sort of anesthesia to dull the pain. They were just 20 minutes in the experiment when they were being called to evacuate. They simply dropped everything and left.

Darman found it hard to believe, but a quick look at the security monitors near the cells proved truth to her words and told her to head over and help Wren out. She complied quickly, hoping to save this Jedi from the same fate that befell the previous test subjects.

He also saw 7 other Jedi in there. He recognized a Mirilian, Jedi Master Luminara Unduli, who was in a meditative stance, A Besalisk Jedi Knight was in a cell nearby, and the tag read as Meng Krisk. He went over and saw two more Jedi, both human males, 24 and 21 respectively, by the names of Ashter Mivos and Marino Falsis, both Jedi Knights, and a female blue Twi'Lek by the name of Saara Gerusa. And he looked at the last one, a Kaminoan Jedi, which her name was Kina Ha.

He wanted to ask Kina on how she became a Jedi, but now was not the time.

"No time for explanations people!" Darman exclaimed. "We need some helpers out in the lab. Jade Lee is still alive, but I need your assistance. Can you help us?"

Luminara stepped forward. "I shall assist. I will not allow a fellow Jedi to die in this horrible place."

Ashter stepped forward as well. "I got some experience with medical equipment. I can help in some of the technical stuff."

The Commando smiled a bit. Maybe Jade had a chance after all. "Alright the rest of you are gonna be on lookout. IF they do decide to come back, we are gonna make sure they are not coming in here without a fight. Let's go!"

When they came to the table, they saw Wren holding down a now fully awake Jade Lee, who was horrified at her condition.

"CALM DOWN!" Wren yelled at the Jedi as she tried to hold her down. Despite her strength, Wren was worried that the clamps on her legs would come loose and she would accidentally harm Jade more than helping her considering her fragile physical state. And when she awoke, Wren added fragile MENTAL state in the resume as well. Her emerald eyes, once filled with confidence, now filled with abject horror on her condition.

"What's happening to me? WHY IS MY CHEST OPEN? WHAT'S GOING ON?!" Jade said in a panicked voice. As much as she was renowned for her calm under fire in time of desperation, she was scared out of her mind.

Her Jedi compatriots came into the room, and were shocked to the core and sick to their stomachs, but they needed to act fast or Jade might harm herself. Meng decided to intervene and helped Wren clamp her down.

"Jade Lee, you WILL STAND DOWN NOW!" Meng roared, shocking even the Spartan present. Krisk was widely known as a Jedi Officer whose voice drowned out even the blaster fire of the battlefield. It was rather unorthodox, but it helps many Clones stop panicking in a fight. He can also be a smooth talker if situation demanded it. It certainly helped out now, as Jade was now calm. Her eyes had tears and she looked as though she was on the verge of collapse. Her tantrum had worn her down completely.

"I-I-I'm s-s-sorry. I didn't mean to-" Jade apologized in a small voice. Meng smiled at young Jade. He had to, because if he did not try to reassure her, then she could harm herself more than they can

help her."

In a gentle, and yet firm voice, he calmed her down. "It is alright. I too am shocked at your current predicament, but you must be calm. There are friends here who can help you, if you only stay calm."

Jade nodded. She was still scared, but Master Krisk's smooth voice reassured her. She calmed down and looked at her gaping chest cavity. She was still sickened at it, but she regained herself. She wished Trips were here with her.

The Spartan Medic sighed. "Thanks Jedi. I owe you."

The Besalisk looked on in curiosity. "I'm surprised a droid can talk as naturally as any person." Wren sighed, and then retracted her helmet, revealing a pretty asian face and blue hair with purple highlights. Her eyes are sky blue, and even her lips had a blue hue on it. The Jedi were shocked that it was human that was in that armor. The Jedi saw her UNSC insignia on her shoulderplates. Luminara and Krisk were amazed. "As you can see, I'm no simple, bot, Master Jedi. "

They would ask more on how the UNSC were able to make such a warrior, but right now, Jade's voice made them remember the priority here.

"Umm, hello guys. I'm right here, you know? Can we please close my gaping chest before we start another conversation?" Jade asked sarcastically. The Jedi took this as a good sign that their fellow Jedi was now calm enough to let them help her. Ko Sai quickly took the lead and began issuing out orders for some sedatives and bacta.

Darman looked on, hoping that they can fix her in time.

* * *

><p>{6 hours later}<p>

"All done!" Ko Sai announced, clapping her hands together. After a grueling surgery, they finally got it done. It became rather dicey when they started to run out of sedatives, but it worked out in the end.

Overlord and the rest of Fireteam Crimson stayed on the sidelines, sometimes watching their comrade operate on the Jedi and sometimes analyzing the data on the Ion Cannon. They had found some of these weapons and scanned them and sent them to Mends for him to give the report to Admiral Morrison. A weapon like this could jeopardize the entire UNSC fleet and hopefully the eggheads at R&D could cook up a defense.

Fireteam Outlaw has yet to arrive as their Pelican was ambushed by some Trandoshans that survived. They shot down the Pelican, but everyone survived. Only the Pilot got a broken leg, so Sev had to watch over him as Fireteam Outlaw cut a path and somehow hijacked a Trandoshan slave ship, at least, according to the message Overlord received from Hot Rod.

Meanwhile, Jade Lee was now made whole again, but was ordered to lie down as her strength was greatly diminished in the operation. Everyone was happy that one crisis was over, but now they had to pack up and leave before the Clones come back.

Right now, everyone was starting to relax for a moment and began to talk, chatting over events happening now, introducing each other, and plans to come for the future. The most interesting of all was Kina Ha, the Kaminoan Jedi, because of the fact the Jedi present were not aware Kina Ha existed.

Kina Ha said that she joined the Order due to the fact that her Force powers caused some sort of a schism between her and her perfectionist peers. The Kaminoans are a scientist race, and her powers simply made them distrustful of her, so she left for the Temple.

She is rarely seen in the Temple because she was in the lowest parts of Kamino, in a hermitage due to the fact she received a Force vision of an army of the Dark Side rising from her planet. She has found out that the Clone Army is that same army in her dream and she came from her lonely vigil to confront her peers in Tipoca City. She tried to determine whether the Clone Army being built was the same army she saw in her dream. She got her confirmation when she was kidnapped by White armored Clone Troopers who snatched her during her return to her outpost in the oceans. She had recently arrived and felt in the Force Jade crying in agony. She thanked the Spartans for saving her and the Jedi in custody. She also thanked them for warning the Council about the Sith Lord currently in power in the Republic. Many were shocked that Palpatine was the Sith Lord they sought out, but they got over it.

She however, confessed disdain in her comrades about how they use the powers of the Force. She was allied with the Jedi Code, than the Jedi Order, because she saw that while the Order was good to her, she saw that it too was slowly ailing, so she turned to the Code as it was the only thing she saw was incorruptible. She saw her Jedi peers using their powers to wage war, rather than use them for upholding the peace.

Meng and Saara argued, but saw some truth in her words. The Jedi have fallen low, to a point where a Sith Lord has manipulated his way in a position of power strong enough to topple the Order. Again, Kina thanked the Spartans and in extension, the UNSC for revealing the ruse before Palpatine could act.

Meanwhile, Ko Sai was talking with Wren and Kal about their aging process cure. Ko Sai was close before she was taken, so now she has to start from scratch, which disheartened Kal. But Wren reassured him that their facilities are top of the line and possessed very advanced tech. She even showed them the facilities from her TACPAD. Ko Sai was very impressed, claiming that their facilities are sufficient enough to rebuild her formula and could theoretically, finish the cure in 2 months ago. With Kina Ha and Ko Sai herself volunteering to use their DNA to help in the cure helped soothe Kal's worries for his sons' future.

Then, to add more good news, Outlaw had finally arrived, with Sev in tow.

Delta team and Walon were shocked. Then Sev decided to break that up

by saying "'Sup?"

Scorch broke into a grin. "Sev, you hard-assed SOB! We thought you were a goner!"

"Well, Trandoshans love to take slaves. This bunch of greedy lizards thought they could profit from me being a slave. They didn't count on these Spartans to save me. I sure didn't."

Fixer greeted him by clapping his brother on the back, with Boss shaking his hand. Delta didn't show much, but they felt good knowing their brother was alive all this time.

Hot Rod saluted and Overlord returned the gesture.

"Took your time, Hot Rod. Enjoying the Landscape?" Overlord asked jokingly.

"Well, sir, we had a few fellow tourists who didn't take too kindly to their ship getting jacked, so we paid them in lots of shiny metal and we were off our way." Hot Rod said in a sing-song tone.

Walon and his sons from Delta came over and greeted Sev, then he turned to the Spartans. "You knew?"

"We had a hunch." Hot Rod Shrugged. White stepped in and began to speak. "Your boy is a handful. How do you deal with that guy?"

Delta team simply shrugged, with Walon answering. "He grows on you eventually."

Just then, Overlord took a call from Captain Mends, who had finished making the repairs on the ship. "Captain, how are the ships going?"

Mends opened the com link "Fine, Commander. We have just finished repairing our Slipspace drives, although the Shadowspear drive needs a complete rehaul. I'm simply glad the Republic ain't catching wind of this yet."

Overlord shrugged. "Don't jinx it yet. We're almost ready to go, so keep your guard up. The Republic might turn on us in yet."

"Roger that, Mends out." Then Mends disconnected the link.

Lance then looked over to where the Mantis Company has brought out their Starship, a Venator Class Warship to be precise, and saw some Ion cannons being loaded in. They'll use that as their bargaining chip to get in the UNSC.

Rei has still yet to find the full manifest of the Ion Cannon Distribution list, so he had no idea who has these weapons now. So the only thing Lance could do was to report back and prays the Republic has none of them ready to use against the UNSC operation in Coruscant.

When he did find out, it would have already been too late to warn.

* * *

><p>{4 hours later, simultaneously with the UNSC Reach already in Coruscant airspace}<p>

Finally, after a miraculous 4 hours of no activity, they finally left the Kashyyyk. The Jammers worked perfectly, and any transmissions by Republic garrisons from the planet's surface have been jammed and even sent counter orders to ensure chaos amongst the ranks and delay them from suspecting the ruse.

They even sent a bogus reply to command when was looking for Orri's ill-fated fleet that was sent to investigate the garrison's lack of response. They led them away and were able to prevent another fleet from coming. The way they were able to easily fool the Republic made many in the Crimson and Outlaw laugh at this, even Lance himself was chuckling at the gullibility of the Republic. They were all in complete shock that while Palpatine, with all his manipulations and cunning, can't seem to understand that the UNSC can play dirty as well.

They just were not really prepared for this. It would be another 24 hours before anyone knew what was going on, but by then, they would already be back in UNSC space.

Lance had placed 3 Tactical Nukes in strategic areas around the facility. It would be detonated as soon as they let themselves out.

As soon as everyone got ready, they began to jump, although the Mandalorians Kal, Marik, Walon, the Jedi prisoners and Omega and Delta squads went onboard the Dark Suffering, with Marik not joining his friends onboard the Prosecutor as he wanted to check out how Slip-space works, and mainly because he had to explain to Robert Lee, her Jedi Brother and Trips, whom he was good friends with, that Jade was ok, which meant he would not tell the full story. And the Dark Suffering has better communication

It had gone well for awhile until Lance "helped" out by providing Wren's helmet cam footage. Too which Marik's expression went pale. When they saw it, they reacted immediately.

Robert was mad, but concerned for his sister's well being, and considering he just saw the part where her sister goes bonkers over her chest cavity open made Robert want to leap through the holo communicator and to where she was staying. "Where is she?! IS SHE ALRIGHT?!" Robert screamed.

Trips, who was considerably much more close to Jade, responded with a rage that makes Mustafar volcano discharges look cold in comparison, in fact, he did get beyond a single sentence when he accidentally smashed his fist through the console and broke the reception. Robert, who knew of her sister's relationship with Trips, calmed the Clone Commander down in another, separate link. He had always supported her relationship and was hoping to help him calm himself before he Trips regained his composure.

"You just had to be truthful." Marik frowned.

"You're welcome." Lance smiled.

"That was sarcasm, if you didn't get it the first time." Marik

grumbled.

"Cheer up, things could get worse."

"Spare me."

It was at that moment that Jade, although in some assistive devices as she was too weak to walk on her own, she had Wren as her guide, as Ko Sai was being interrogated by Lt. Roberts via hologram. When both men returned, Jade was there to greet them both, which relieved them both.

"I am glad you are safe, sister. I had feared the worst when I sawâ€¦" Robert trailed off when he just could not find it in himself to say what had happened, with Trips unable to speak a word. Jade lifted her hand and smiled at both of them.

Trips smiled back. "I was afraid. When I saw it, I thought you were dead for sure. To see youâ€¦" Trips touched the screen as though he was touching her cheek.

"You can't get rid of me that easily." Jade said. Just then Captain Lorenzo Mends sounded over the intercom.

"Attention, all hands, this is your Captain speaking. We are now about to depart. Report to your stations and begin final launch procedures. That is all." And the message repeated over the comms.

Jade realized that she will see them soon. "Look, we have a lot to talk about, but can we do this later? We're about to get out of here." Jade said. Both looked rather unhappy, but agreed. Robert said his farewell and logged off, leaving Trips and Jade left.

"I'll be back soon. You'll see me again." Jade reassured Trips, who relented.

"Fine. Please be safe. I love you." Trips said in a soft voice.

"I love you too." She said, and closed the link. Wren, who was standing outside, helped her patient back into the medical bay as the ship entered slipspace.

****Like it? Thought it was too abrupt? Don't sweat it! Now we go to the present!****

Epilogue

{Glinn's Field, Present, 5 minutes after Dark Suffering arrived in Worth}

The Pelican's atmosphere was one of anticipation. Its occupants, all Jedi, with the exception of Wren, who was still helping Jade recover, are nervous. Just a few hours ago, they were informed that the Jedi had made it out, but some were killed on Coruscant. The Jedi were sorrowful that so many died. But many more still lived, thanks to some more Clones defecting as well. Out of the 10,000 Jedi that existed, only 7,000 survived, the most casualties taking place in the Temple. It was a good way to start again, with so many more Jedi that survived. The Pelican was assigned to take them to Glinn's field,

where the majority of the Jedi were being housed.

In the next Pelican, Omega and Delta with Walon and Kal, are also heading over to Glinn's field to meet up with some Clone deserters, like Rex and Trips to discuss future plans for the Clones that deserted.

Darman was worried. But he worked it out. HE was given assurance from Lance who told him that his wife was now safe, and was waiting for him in the Hangar bays. Ordo and the Nulls were also there, and Fi was glad that Zilka survived as well. In fact, she was there for nearly a week now.

Commander Escandor had recently received word that brand new weaponry would be coming in from the UNSC Preston Cole. Lance rolled his eyes. He liked using guns as much as any other Spartan when presented with new weaponry. Amongst the latest, a brand new weapon that Lance took personal interest. He did not know the full details, but the weapon he was looking out for was called the "Typhoon" since he knew that was the only gun with 10 barrels. He was yet to be informed on its weapon capabilities, so he had to wait for it to come.

Since he was feeling a bit dramatic, he decided to impress his guests with his entrance: by dropping in straight from the ship to the base itself. The rogue Commandoes were actually impressed, and in awe. Sev himself wanted to try it out. But was overruled by his brothers when they used the Pelican instead of the Drop Pods, even though Lance invited them in.

The Jedi outside were hearing a slight whistle, and all of a sudden, 11 figures suddenly landed, sending some of the Padawans ducking for cover. Fireteam Trinity came over, guns blazing, but when they saw it was Lance, they stood in attention. Mace Windu and a few other Jedi rushed over with lightsabers drawn, but when they saw the Spartans, they hesitated for a moment until Yoda himself came over and told them to stand down.

"Impressive entrance, that was." Yoda commented.

"Thanks. I wanted to see for myself who our new guests are, but got impatient so I decided to drop in." Lance said. "I guess for now, we should introduce ourselves. My name is Lance, callsign Overlord, of Lost Legion, at your service."

Mace Windu holstered his lightsaber, and walked up to the two. "I am Master Windu, this is Master Yoda," he introduced, gesturing to the small but wise master next to him.

"Good to finally meet you, Masters." He bowed his head slightly to them, with both of them returning the gesture. "Now if you excuse me, I need to head over to Morrison, for debriefing." He then disassembled his Helmet, with his Spartans doing the same. The Jedi assembled there were in awe of the technological feat done by these Spartans. The Spartan themselves left the area into the inner part of the compound. Lance took a glimpse at Daniel, who then stood even straighter than usual. The Sniper got the message soon enough.

We'd talk later. Commander Escandor maybe in command of Lost Legion, but his rank practically ensures his authority over all of the Spartans in Andromeda. He'd just heard that Spartan Stepson was

leaving and wanted a word on the matter.

5 minutes later, the Pelicans touched down, and its passengers descended. Trips was the first to greet the Jedi, or rather, the one Jedi he had his heart to: Jade.

He ran to her and both of them hugged each other, with Trips relieved that she was safe at last, and Jade feeling even safer with Trips' arms around her. "I missed you." Trips said in a tender voice, uncommon to Clone troopers.

"You won't get rid of me that easily." Jade pronounced, before Trips cupped her face and kissed her. Knight Robert Lee and Master John Cypher looked on, happy for the both of them. A similar scene happened with Etain Tur-Mukan, who was holding her baby, and Darman, with his extended family looking on in joy.

"Cyar'ika," Darman's voice cracked.

"K'uur, my love." Etain whispered. "I'm here. Nothing will ever take me from you again." The Skirata clan watched with content as their two members cherished their moments together.

Kal then turned to where Lance and his crew have walked to. They went inside a hangar to a small doorway leading elsewhere. Kal did not mind this, though. For now, he was simply content to watch his family enjoy the peace while they can.

* * *

><p>{Debriefing Room C, 5 minutes later}<p>

"Well done, boys and girls. We have successfully downloaded the data from the facility. Hopefully, we'll develop a counter to this new weapon." Lance said, garnering clapping from the Spartans.

Crimson, Outlaw, and Trinity all gathered in the debrief for all of them to give their reports and accounts of their mission. Crimson was first, then Outlaw, and then Trinity. Truthfully, despite their long service in the Clone Wars, Trinity is relatively new by Spartan standards, but Lance knew that this was no different than any Spartan under his command, so they are given due respect. When all was said and done, they all left for their respective barracks quarters, except for Lance and Daniel, who Lance had personally requested to stay.

Daniel was nervous. This man was akin to his old ODS1 drill instructor, with more subtlety than CBMI operatives. This man was held in the same breath as Spartan II operatives, with their strength and stealth all in spades, there was a reason he was in command of Lost Legion. He slowly walked to Daniel, and despite his Spartan training, he found himself intimidated by this man. He was known in many Spartan teams as a monster in combat, one who fights with precision and yet with ferocity that makes other Spartans look like ODS1 recruits. He expected him to be very displeased with him leaving the Spartans, and he was expecting him to scream at him like a rabid bear. He was nervous because Lance might chew him out for leaving the Spartans. Despite the contrary, Spartans are lifers, for the most part. They consider their comrades as an extended family, so Lance would be upset a bit if he did leave.

Instead, Lance held out his hand in a sign of good faith.
"Congratulations, Spartan."

Confused, yet relieved, Daniel took his hand and shook it. "Thank you, sir. For a minute there, I thought you were gonna chew me out for leaving the Spartans." Daniel confessed.

"I have thought about it." Lance replied. "But, being able to start a life outside being a Spartan is something most people our group yearns for after long years of battling. Even after much hardships and tribulations, even a Spartan can get battle weary, even after a while."

"Thanks for your understanding sir. All I need to do is confirm it with Admiral Morrison and I can finally spend my time with my Riyo." Daniel proudly said. Lance grinned at him.

"Seems you got your life figured out, huh, pal? Let me tell you something: You may leave the armor, the weapons that made you a Spartan, and the comrades you formed with, but remember, the doors are always open." Lance said.

"Thank you." Daniel said as he turned around and began to leave. A few steps in, though, before Lance called to him.

"Good luck, kid." Lance said, and he too left in another direction. Daniel acknowledges it, and then went out to go to his soon to be wife.

Lance smirked a bit. This was a good day indeed. Now, all he had to do was rest, then contact Admiral Morrison.

He had much to discuss.

For the things to comeâ€¦|

Lifting the Veil

{Darkness Falls ONI Facility, Near Sangheili-held Colony of Singril, Milky Way Galaxy.}

Captain Gideon Hammer of the CBMI STARU unit Hawker Squad has been assigned to a CBMI Prowler for one purpose: To find Hidden ONI bases that the UNSC have not been able to find since its demise. The last ONI director, Serin Osman, had made many strides, yet made many mistakes. The Spartan Scandal was the mistake that cost her everything.

Even though she was held by the UNSC, Osman refused to expose hidden ONI bases as her leverage. It did not, however, help her escape the Executioner's firing squad. Since then, CBMI had been working non-stop in the Milky Way, trying to uncover secrets that ONI has guarded for years. It had taken them many years, but they did find many hidden ONI bases, thanks to some left over data that Osman had not been able to delete in time before her arrest.

Despite the damage done by ONI's Kilo Five section, the CBMI manage to reverse most of Osman's subterfuge, thanks to a rather unlikely source.

The Last, and largest, of these have finally been found. Darkness Falls was not just a simple ONI facility. In fact, they got this lead through sheer luck, when they found a rather defunct AI, Black Box, or BB, when they were looking through the old base. Although hostile at first, using the AI override, "Undid Iridium", BB fell in line, and numerous CBMI AI were able to convert it completely. Even though it tried to feign allegiance, the CBMI AI, Bond, designed to look like Ian Flemming's spy creation, detected the ruse, and truly converted his code to CBMI.

BB then proceeded to tell them everything, which led to Captain Hammer to Darkness Falls. But even with such data, BB was still unable to discern its purpose, stating that some memory banks were wiped out. He only knew that it existed as a place that served to keep her darkest secrets. Beyond that, and BB was not able to say anything else.

And so, Captain Hammer and his team, Hawker squad, have been assigned to clear out any information relegating to ONI.

Sgt. Hondo Sindors, a 35 year old black man and second in command, spoke up. "Bit audacious, don't you think?" Hondo asked.

Gideon nodded. "Indeed, very. But also ingenious. Who would look for an ONI base near Sangheili held territory?"

"Indeed. Heads up, boss, our LZ is coming up." Hondo pointed out as he saw the Hangar coming up. They were in a Pelican and began to descend. The Facility itself is located in a small Moon, just a few lightyears from the Sangheili colony.

The 8 man team came from the Pelican, securing the area. Once done, Gideon used a Neural Lace to communicate with BB, who was accompanying them. Despite his lack of memory banks with regards to the facility, BB knew Serin Osman very well, so had the best chance of helping out. Another team arrives soon to begin cataloguing any information and data that was stored here.

Corporal Janice Hudgens, a 25 year old soldier who was transferred to Hawker Squad after her outstanding performance in beating back Trandoshan slavers in a convoy raid, looked at her CO and asked. "So, what happens now?"

BB's form, a black box, appeared in holographic form. "Now we head over to the main control chamber. I am still lacking in memory about this place, but I do know that my former boss liked to keep an eye on things from high vantage point, so look high." BB advised.

At the back of the group, two Privates, Spencer and Troy, whispered. "You think this is a trap?"

"Hey, I'm just following orders." Unbeknownst to them, BB heard the exchange.

"Even after all this time, the UNSC still has not increased its IQ stock" BB sighed. Gideon shook his head as he heard Troy and Spencer argue with BB.

"Alright, enough, we have a job to do, so let's get to it." And with

that, he led his team onward.

The group set out into the facility. Not more than a minute in, and they found bodies.

Not just some security force, the bodies were wearing GEN2 Armor.

Spartan IVs Gideon thought.

His team also had things to say about the carnage, but kept it brief. They knew that their answers lied within the command center of the facility.

They moved on in, until they came into a large, open facility, with computers, and data consoles all dark. The area itself is dimly lit. The team moved forwards, taking note of the equipment on the tables. Most quipped that this tech was advanced, yet seemed to be in the bench mark stage. Many in the team began to wonder that whoever attacked the facility seemed to be moving inward, as though they were going for the same thing.

Gideon was getting uneasy as he headed upwards, towards the main control center.

Finally, they arrived after a short while.

"Plug me in." BB said, and Gideon used his TACPAD to insert the AI in the console. After a few minutes, the consoles around the control center lit up. BB's form projected in a nearby terminal.

"Give me a few minutes, I will have full control in shortly; feel free to look around if you wish. I have unlocked some security footage in the nearby terminal. Most of it has been wiped out, so I only found these."

The team did so, and they found something most shocking. They saw the security force fighting an unknown enemy, but were not using any plasma, so it ruled out any Covenant involvement. But something about these assailants did not match up. For one thing, they were fast, and another, they were strong, as a group of soldiers were floored by a flying piece of heavy machinery that came at them at high speeds.

"Must be Spartans," Hondo quipped. "No way can an inanimate object be flown that fast, and into soldiers no less."

"Keep watching, we still don't know the full picture." Janice hissed, and they did so. They saw some soldiers retreating and being gunned down, with security cameras being shot along the way.

They saw more soldiers coming in, and this time with Spartan IVs with black GEN2 Armor. When they got in the fight, the soldiers were cut down, but the Spartans pushed on, until one of them got sniped from the enemy.

The IVs decided to take the fight to the enemy, to stop the sniper from getting a clear shot. It was then that they spotted their assailants. They were Spartans, but different, they were taller, yet their movements were faster, and judging the footage where in one of

them breaks a Spartan IV's arm and proceeds to knife the poor sod in the neck, much better.

Gideon and Hondo realized that these were much better Spartans, and knew who else could do what those Spartans could do.

"Spartan IIs" Hondo breathed.

"Not just any Spartan IIs look at that one over there." Troy pointed out on screen, and saw a few of them taking casualties from a fast moving Spartan II with a Shotgun. The Spartan had a blue shoulder plate on and had a rabbit insignia on it.

"I recognize that symbol." Spencer said. "It was a sign of the Hell Rabbits, under the command of-"he trailed off.

Gideon finished for him "Kelly-087." They then saw 3 other Spartans, with a Green colored Spartan in the lead. And Gideon recognized two of them. The one with the knife over a skull insignia belongs to Frederic-104, and when the Sniper catches up, the sniper had a Bullseye insignia, and Spencer recognized it as part of Far Sight squad patch, and their leader was Linda-058.

Gideon put two and two together, with all those Spartan-IIs there, especially since these three have a history together as a group, there was only one person who could rally all those Spartans together.

"Then that person leading them isâ€¦" Janice gasped. Apparently she too recognized the figure.

"Master Chief Petty Officer John-117." Hondo announced.

The team was silent in the implications. Because these three Spartans have been declared MIA for years, and most of the UNSC assumed them to be after records of them were announced that they had disappeared, but the rest of it was covered in black ink. They then saw more Spartan IVs, but this time, they came WITH the Spartan IIs.

"Sir, we've been looking for them for years. If this place has any information pertaining to themâ€¦" Charlie, the groups' rookie, spoke up at last.

"Then we may have found something that Osman's been hiding for years: The information pertaining to the Spartans IIs and Doctor Catherine Halsey."

When the arrests came, Halsey, the brainchild of the Spartan II program, had disappeared, with no trace to her existence. Since then, as the CBMI raided more and more safehouses, they found out that Halsey was a pawn, and that her actions were dictated by ONI. CBMI was then tasked to bringing her in, and setting her right, for all the wrong done to her.

Now, it seems as though they may have the chance now. But unfortunately, the video ended there, with the rest wiped out.

"BB, are you done yet?" The Captain asked, and on cue, lights turned on.

"I am now, "said BB in a slightly smug voice.

"Where was this taken?"

"The Cryo Chambers, Deck 5 of the Alpha Wing B, to your north."

"Then boys and girls," Gideon began, plugging BB out as well. "Let's dig out some skeletons from this closet." And they set out into the large building structure located north.

{Cryo Chamber A, 10 minutes later}

After a few minutes traversing a bullet riddled, and corpse ridden hallways, they finally made it to the Cryo Chambers.

"Open this door." Gideon ordered BB and the metal frame opened.

The Group did a sweep and clear check before signaling the all clear. Hansel, the team's hacker, came to a console that seemed to have a sent message icon in the background. And he found something shocking. "Boss! You need to see this!"

Gideon came over. "What is it?" He then looked in the panel, and with his eyes widened.

He saw a file, but had the SPARTAN II logo stamped on it, and saw the sender was anonymous, but its destination was Sydney, Australia. The time stamp was April 25, 2590.

The day ONI fell to pieces.

"So this is where the leak started." Gideon said under his breath.

"Yeah, it seems so, but who sent it?" Hansel asked.

"SIR! Get over here, right now!" Hondo's voice echoed down the hall.

"We're about to find out, Hansel."

The two of them formed up on Hondo, who just got the door breached because its magnetic locks broke. Once that's done, they peered inside and saw Dozens of cryotubes lined up.

But that's not why Hondo called. He called because he found that there were still people in the cryotubes, in deep sleep.

But the occupants inside them were the more shocking discoveries of the day, as they found at least 20 dedicated cryotubes that are still active.

They found not only Spartan II Blue Team, but they also found Spartan II Grey Team, who was previously listed as MIA during the Covenant War. They also found some Spartan IVs, but seemed to be in more vibrant colors, but that did not faze the others. They would be processed soon enough.

They then found a single, solitary cryotube at the end of the

hallway. And its occupant made everyone stop what they were doing.

"Is that-?" Spencer began, but Hondo beat him to the punch.

"It is. This is the one. Orders, sir?" Hondo questioned Gideon, who took some time before replying.

"Send word to General Chernof immediately. This is one ghost of the past that we won't let slip so easily." He ordered, and they all scattered to do different assignments.

The Cryotube held an elderly woman, yet it had rather stern features, she had a labcoat on, and a mechanical arm where he left arm was supposed to be. The ID on the cryotube was broken, with some words too corrupted to be shown properly, but it could make out a few words:

Do-r C t*r(n Halsey.

END! How was it? IS it good, please tell me?

This will serve as a precursor of the things to come for the future.

**NEXT: We take ourselves to the present, and new allies join the UNSC. And the Jedi are beginning to slowly understand and comprehend the Terrans and their multi-faceted culture. **

Meanwhile, people beginning to awaken and Halsey, 117, and the Spartans from Grey, Blue, Crimson and Majestic are going to see a different galaxy that they could not comprehend.

And, Anakin faces his demons and realizes that Commander Escandor may have more in common with him than he thinks.

6. Episode 6

**All right! We go to the present for the next two chapters as we delve into how Anakin gets his group therapy down, and how he may be similar to a certain Spartan than he thinks. Read the end of Chapter 5 to find out what this chapter is all about. **

Episode 6: A Dark Closetâ€¦|

{Nightmare}

A young girl was running across a beautiful field of flowers, and a man chased her. Both were smiling and laughing. The man chased after her and called out, "Malika!" He ran towards her, and when she turned around and the man recoiled in horror. Her eyes were crimson, and blood came down from every orifice of her body. She smiled as the man continued to look on in horror. The field of flowers then burst into flame, and the sky turned from blue to red. She whispered.

"Why didn't you save me, Lance?"

* * *

><p>{Commander's quarters}<p>

Commander Escandor woke up with a start. He wiped sweat from his brow. He had a nightmare, one that has haunted him less and less, but still gave him fits. Thankfully, Doctor Schofield would be there to help him, and another person was helping him as well.

Next to him was Wren, who was clearly naked, and her sensitive parts seem to be covered up by the bed sheets. She was sleeping still, but she had a upward curve of her lips. Lance smiled at her. He was precious to him, and despite her Spartan status, God help whoever wanted to bring harm to her.

He kissed her softly on the lips, which got her eyes fluttering awake. She smiled up at him.

"Hey." He said

"Hey." She said, before she kissed back at him, while throwing her arms around his neck to bring him closer to her. After a few moments, they broke apart.

"Are you heading over to that session now?" She asked groggily. Lance shook his head. "Not yet, I have to report in with Admiral Morrison about Janus."

She swung her legs to the side, causing her to sit up and almost losing her only means of covering her chest. Lance smiled at her, and kissed her forehead. "I'll get there, don't worry." Wren said.

Lance gripped her hand a bit. "I hope so." Then left the room and Wren also left 10 minutes later. She went to the medical center. She hoped that Lance would be okay until then. She had heard his story, and even up to now, she wondered whether Lance has the capability to get over it.

Hopefully, this therapy session would help him, where she could not.

* * *

><p>{Glenn's Field, 24 hours after the Jedi Exodus, The Present}<p>

Jedi Master Kans Merccsis, A 30 year old Jedi Master with black hair and black eyes, had woken up after 8 hours of sleep. The last few days had taken a toll on most of his peers and the younglings were exhausted from the events of the Jedi Temple. He had rubbed the sleepiness of his eyes to adjust to his surroundings. He saw many Knights and Padawans lying in various states of sleep, some face down, some hanging from the side of the bed, or some were on the floor, to make way for their Padawans, or the younglings.

Kans realized that this was a Marine Barracks he and his fellow Jedi have taken temporary residence for now. It seemed like it was so long ago, that they were the saviours of the galaxy, and Kans was dedicated to bringing peace and stability to the galaxy.

Now, he was down on his luck, his robes are in tatters, with blaster holes still on his robes. He still wore them, but he knew that the

robes had to go. He still held onto them for sentimental value.

I must really be getting old for this Kans said, and took it off and threw it into a trash disposer before walking out into the base proper. He saw men and women of the UNSC walk around and doing things like exercises or carrying materials or going into practice ranges. He also saw some fellow Jedi standing over there in the hangars, looking rather lost. He even saw some Clones who left the Republic conversing with Jedi and Marines. And he even saw some armored beings as well.

Spartans Kans thought.

Kans could not blame the Jedi moping. Just hours ago, the Republic they swore to protect had just turned its back on the Order based on the lies of Chancellor Palpatine, aka Darth Sidious, the Sith Lord the Jedi have been looking for ever since the blockade of Naboo decades ago. It made him mad, knowing how many Jedi died for a Republic that was under the command of the Sith, unknowingly or not.

Fellow Master Aayla Secura scooted up from behind him, she too having that same look of distress and loss that now became the norm. They were now Knights without a kingdom, or a Republic, to defend. It was disheartening.

Still, Aayla tried to keep Jedi spirits up. She would not succumb to the despair the majority of Jedi were feeling.

"This is not the end, Master Merccsis. We are still here, and we will come back from this." Aayla tried to assure Kans, but he still remained glum.

"Does not mean we shouldn't mourn for our losses." Kans said. Many of them escaped, but a lot more Jedi were still lost in the defense of the Temple. Many a Jedi lost brothers and sisters to both blaster bolt and explosion of fire. Kans lost some good friends, and mourned for them, even up to now.

Aayla fell silent, knowing that she too held some scars as well. Many Jedi could not sleep, and kept crying, and are even muttering incoherently. It almost broke the Order already. Then, UNSC soldiers, personnel, and staff did all that they could to comfort the Jedi. Most of them held the younglings and even some Knights as they sobbed and wept for their losses. Kans himself found a young marine who held him as he cried. For all their stoicism, organic beings can only last so long against so much. The Temple just proved too overwhelming to them. Later, the Jedi were told that most of them suffered an anxiety disorder known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD for short.

It is common amongst soldiers who have been through many horrific battle scenarios, and found themselves unable to cope with the magnitude of carnage they have seen. Many in the UNSC realized that help would be needed for the Jedi.

A UNSC Marine then told most of them would be scheduled for therapy, or psychological therapy, for the Jedi. Many of them consented, with Master Shaak Ti going first, as she took the hit hardest of them all, despite her years of training and experience. Kans knew that sooner

or later, he too would have to face the Doctor and see his nightmares put to rest.

"You seem rather optimistic, Master Secura. I envy you for it." Kans admitted. Aayla gave him a good smile. "Not all of us are bound by grief, Master Merccsis."

"I wholeheartedly agree, Master Secura." A voice echoed from behind the two. Kans and Aayla looked behind to see Obi-Wan Kenobi walk up to them, with Siri Tachi holding his hand. Judging from their stances, smiles on their faces, and the way they held their hands. Kans couldn't help but feel happy for them, as did Aayla.

"It seems as though you two didn't waste any time." Aayla remarked. Both chuckled.

"Well, Obi-Wan took his time a bit. I simply waited for him to come from him." Siri said, making Obi-Wan roll his eyes at that.

"Excuse me? If I didn't recall correctly, YOU were the one who came to me, not the other way around, Siri." Obi-Wan said, earning a rather playful jab on the arm by Siri. Kans could not help but notice that both Siri and Obi-Wan were acting together with such affection that, not too long ago, would have gotten them kicked off the Order. With the change in such policy, however, many Jedi now found comfort in each other, a Clone, or even someone from the UNSC. Kans couldn't help but feel jealous on the new couple. If Obi-Wan could find such happiness, couldn't he?

"You two certainly did not waste time in getting together." Kans said. Siri smiled at him "Well, we did have a long history together." She smiled, before kissing Obi-Wan's cheek. The Jedi in question blushed, as Siri and even Aayla giggled at the sight. Kans himself held back a chuckle.

He had heard rumors about Obi-Wan and Siri being a couple a few years ago after their mission in Azure, where they had to take a ruthless bounty hunter, Magus, into custody. Siri jumped on his ship as he tried to leave and stopped Magus Cold, Magus shot at her, and earned a blaster shot to the arm and leg for her troubles, crashing both of them into the ground. Obi-Wan got to her side in time and treated her wounds. Many Jedi speculated that they were a couple after their mission, but it is still unclear what transpired during the time they left Azure, but Obi-Wan assured most of them that they remain friends, despite their closeness.

With Anakin exposed to have broken the celibacy made by the Order, Obi-Wan and Siri took it slow at first, but after a few hours of discussing, and concluding it with a hug and kiss, they officially got together, much to the happiness of Anakin and approved by Yoda himself. Kans hoped that one day; he'd find that happiness that Obi-Wan has right now.

For now, he'll simply content himself with what he has now. And right now, Siri and Obi-Wan were hugging each other and kissing, with Aayla looking on in amusement. Apparently, their argument ended in a "kiss and make up" as some Terrans would say it. Kans cleared his throat so that his presence is still acknowledged. Siri and Obi-Wan broke the contact off, both having red cheeks.

"I apologize for that." Obi-Wan said. Kans narrowed his eyes on the couple. "Make sure that next time, when you display your affection; do so when not in front other people." Kans advised, and both Obi-Wan and Siri nodded sheepishly, with Aayla still amused from the previous scene.

"Well, now what?" Obi-Wan said after he composed himself. Kans decided after a few moments of silence.

"For now, we find out just how to spend our time here wisely." Kans said. Obi-Wan raised an eyebrow. "What do you mean?" He asked.

"We basically find out how to pitch in, or how to better interact with the Terrans. They saved us, yet we know so little about them, nor are we very close to them. So , the best way to do that, is to explore the base a bit, get to know our surroundings, and the people around it." Kans suggested.

"That does sound very prudent, Master Merccsis. The Terrans let us in, so it would be best to return that kindness to the, even if it is as minor as making friends with them." Siri complimented.

"I agree," Aayla said. "If we are to regain the trust of the people in the Jedi, we can begin doing so here, in New Plymouth." She said.

And the four began to walk to the lower levels, to where most personnel and Jedi were there.

* * *

><p>{Meanwhile,}<p>

Etain and Lance stepped out of the Conference room, with the former looking weary and the latter was a bit neutral in his expression.

"I trust that whatever transpired here does not leave that room?" Lance asked. Etain nodded hesitatingly.

"Yes, although this troubles me. " Etain admitted. The last few hours have really taken a toll on her, especially the revelation that there exists long lost powerful relics of ancient beings who might have had a hand in the Andromeda to be rather overwhelming on a human mind, Jedi or not.

"The Jedi will be informed, but not before we confirm their presence here in Andromeda." Lance said. "If it is confirmed, you can tell them. But for now, I trust you will only relay this to Kal and Darman. I need them onboard if they expect me to help them fully."

"But you truly believe that an outpost of these "Forerunners" exist within Mandalore? The Taung did not leave any indication of such a race of powerful entities in their records." Etain said.

"The Forerunners were very thorough, and the Absolute Record does not lie. There are Forerunners, or their technologies, present in Andromeda." Lance reasoned.

"Will they come to harm the galaxy?" Etain asked.

"We will soon find out." Lance said, before he changed the topic.

"Now, I believe I am going to attend a Psychiatric session with some Jedi. You are welcome to join me and your family too." Lance offered.

Etain thought about it. Then decided to come along, but after she got her husband to join her. It would be a perfect chance to learn more on Terrans, especially on how they can help traumatized Jedi get over their experiences from the Temple.

"Well, considering your charms, I'm sure you can help the Jedi. Sure, I could spare a minute or two. Just let me get my Husband first." Etain said, before she turned around and left, leaving Lance alone in the Hallway.

Lance immediately put down his façade of happiness, revealing a rather grim expression on his face. "If you saw more of me, you'd think differently." He said to himself, before going to the area where the Jedi are working out their issues with Glenda Schofield.

On his way, he bumped into Kans and his group. "Greetings." Kans greeted, and then proceeded to introduce his group to the Spartan, and in turn, Lance gave his name, but only his first name. "What brings you here?" Lance asked.

"We are on our way to the area where the Jedi are being "helped" by your doctors. Can you tell me where they are?" Aayla asked.

"I'm on my way as well, you can follow me if you wish. But first, I'll show you around, since this is your first time." Lance offered. He also took this opportunity to lead them to places where they should go, and places they should not go. Better nip the curiosity first before it kills the Jedi.

"Thank you." Kans said, before he and his group followed Lance through the building.

* * *

><p>{ Glinn's Field, 2 hours later}<p>

Lance took his time, answering questions about the UNSC from his guests, mostly from Siri and Kans, while Obi-Wan and Aayla mostly listened in, sometimes opening up with a few questions of their own. Lance seemed to enjoy telling them information, as it would distract him from his current troubles.

He and his Jedi Tourist Group (He nicknamed them as such, much to the annoyance of Siri and Aayla, with Kans simply shrugging the notion, and Obi-Wan simply sighing) were led through the base, showing them the ups and downs of the base. He first showed them the barracks, then the armory and then some of the networking centers. All the while, Lance led them through the more sensitive parts and told them that these were only for the UNSC high officers and that the Jedi would only be allowed access to the more accessible parts of the base.

Along the way, Lance saw former Pantoran senator and soon to be wife of Daniel Stepson, Riyo Chuchi, with soon to be former Spartan Daniel Stepson, walking and talking and laughing about something. Lance decided to stop by and greet the soon to be married couple.

"Well, well, what a sight." Lance said in a loud voice, startling the two as they Riyo jumped a bit, and Daniel turning his head so quick, he nearly gave himself whiplash. Daniel was about to salute when the Commander held up his hand to stop Daniel's gesture.

"I've never been one for formalities, Daniel, so drop it." Lance said, and Daniel complied. "What brings you here, sir?" Daniel asked respectfully, taking note of the Jedi behind the Commander.

"I saw you were having a good time, Daniel. So I decided to drop in and see what you are up to." Lance pointed out, and then turned to Riyo. "So you must be the blue skinned beauty that stole the Spartan's heart over there?" He asked, gesturing to Daniel, who fidgeted rather uncomfortably, with the Jedi watching him curiously.

Riyo's cheeks blushed bluer. "I am flattered, Commander Lance. Daniel has always held you in high regard." She said, briefly giving a small smile to Daniel, who returned the gesture, before facing again to Lance.

He then gave introductions with the Jedi and Daniel, with Obi-Wan acknowledging Riyo beforehand.

"Well, if that is all, I still need to guide these tourists around." Lance said, pointing his thumb to the group behind him.

"Mind if we come along?" Riyo asked. Daniel was about to say "Don't bother", but Lance surprisingly said yes. "Sure, I might as well learn more on how Daniel's bed manners got you to marrying him." Lance said jokingly, causing the Jedi to laugh, and the couple to blush, with the Spartan redder than a tomato. Lance gave a hearty laugh at his expression.

Clearly, his day was improving.

* * *

><p>{Therapy Session B, 60 minutes later.}<p>

The group took another hour, spending time looking around, trying to integrate into the UNSC. Siri made friends with some female ensigns, with Aayla able to converse with two marines and an ODST (Orbital Drop Shock Trooper), and Obi-Wan talking with Lance. Kans was actually having a good conversation with some ODSTs and a Marine group.

Kans noticed some rivalry between the two, differentiating the UNSC from the Clones that Kans used to serve with during the Clone Wars. Unlike the Clones, UNSC soldiers are slightly less obedient than Clones, so if he were to fight alongside these men and women, he would have to work harder on gaining their trust. After some time, he and his group left with Lance.

They arrived in a large room with Jedi sitting in a circular motion, similar to how the Jedi Council would sit, but most of them were either Knights or Padawans, all of them showing some form or signs of the deep mental scarring in their expressions. Obi-Wan saw some other Jedi behind them, or some member of the UNSC giving support with individual members. Clearly, these people must have been trusted enough to help them deal with the mental trauma.

Obi-Wan then spotted Anakin and Ahsoka, sitting together, with Padme behind him and putting her hand on his shoulder as a sign of trust. Obi-Wan and Siri went over to his side while Aayla went over to another fellow Jedi for support. Kanan had little to do, so he made his way to some balconies.

Ahsoka, had only Padme and Anakin for support until she felt a hand on her right shoulder. Ahsoka looked up and to her surprise and delight, Barriss came for her friend. The Mirialian offered a small smile, which was returned with a rather large hug from the Togrutan Jedi, and she returned it, before they took their seats. Lance took his seat near the doctors, who acknowledge the Spartan's presence before they got everyone's attention.

"Alright people, now that everyone is here, I suggest we get started on this therapy session." Doctor Glenda Schofield called out.

Everyone did so and sat on the chairs provided. Some spectators would be present in some of the balconies above the room. Glenda and 10 other doctors sat down next to Lance.

"As you all know, most of you are here for counseling, as requested by Morrison and Grand Master Yoda. I know some of you disagree to being here," Glenda said, who merely glanced at some masters, who looked a bit uncomfortable, but otherwise fine. "But we Terrans know that after your ordeals, it can be understandable that you have some difficulties getting over those experiences. Some are more, deeper than others." She said, glancing over to Jade Lee, with her brother Robert and her companion Trips holding her hands on each side, and slightly squeezing them to acknowledge their presence with her.

"We call that Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, an anxiety disorder where traumatic events usually leave a lasting impression on soldiers who come back from long tours of duty. In your case, the last 48 hours have left your home in ruins will have a very negative effect for most, and in some cases," Glenda said, turning to Anakin Skywalker, "recall some repressed memories from the past and into the present."

"Today, we are going to share our experiences, so that all of us," She said, gesturing to everyone in the room. "Can help you get through it with all of you. Now, this is not a quick fix, but rather, this is a small step to recovery." Glenda then beckoned to Lance. "Commander Escandor has been part of the Rehabilitation program for Spartans dealing with their stresses and emotions when it comes to combat. Even Spartans can succumb to the same factors you are dealing with." She said. Most of the Rehabilitations came at least 2 months after the Human-Covenant War, as many survivors and veterans often had trouble dealing with their traumatic experiences. Since then, it has become a mandatory part of the UNSC, as the mental aspect of any conflict can drain anyone, regardless if they are superhuman or

not.

The Andromeda branch was a recent thing, given that many refugees from the slave world of the Zygerrians are still suffering wounds the cut deeper than any blade. They had recently been given the monumental task of aiding the Jedi, half of the 7,000 or more people rescued from Order 66. Right now, there were many members that needed aid, but only a mere 200 will be getting the help for now. However, more doctors from the Milky Way would arrive soon, so help will be given to the Jedi in time.

Lance had been a part of it since leaving the Headhunters, and has often been playing the doctor role in comforting many of his fellow Spartans from the mental scars that haunt them. Spartans can adapt to more stress than normal men, but are not infallible to it. His expertise brought him to where he is now, aiding the Jedi.

One by one, the Jedi began talking. Many of them still dealing with recent events, others had much older, yet still scarring even up to this day, recently brought to the surface after the loss of the Temple. But the real shocker came when a few Jedi came forward telling everyone that some of them let the dark side take over them. Only through will, friends or loved ones, or even coincidence, which the Jedi present were able to come back from the brink.

The most disturbing of those accounts were from Anakin Skywalker himself. Confessing to his experience of anger that overcame him before the Battle of Geonosis, he retold his story to the Jedi, with every word spoken as though it took great effort to say it out loud. He had described to them first came to seek out his mother after recurring nightmares of his mother dying. He was describing to them now how he came to meet his new stepdad, Cliegg Lars.

"I had found out from him that my mother was taken by Tusken Raiders. I took after them, going by any leads, from merchants or traveling caravans. It took me a few days, but I found the Tusken Raiders responsible." Anakin paused, as if his next words would get him the unabashed hatred of every Jedi in the room.

Padme squeezed her hand on his, reminding him that she was there to support him. Obi-Wan did the same, as did Siri, and Ahsoka. "Master, please, we won't judge you." Ahsoka encouraged. Truthfully, she was slightly shocked that her master fell to the Dark Side so early in his life, but she was here now, and can help her master get through this, as well as using this to help herself as well.

"When I found her, it was too late. The Tusken Raiders had beaten her and tortured her like a wild Bantha, with her tied up to a wooden pole." Anakin said, the experience literally bringing him to tears. Obi-Wan gripped his shoulder tighter, as a sign of support.

"She died right as I found her, and-"Anakin sobbed. Ahsoka was disheartened with such a display. Her experiences were traumatic, but clearly this one would haunt his master even up to this day.

"This is painful, Master Skywalker," Glenda said, "but the pain will not go away unless you let someone in."

Anakin took a deep breath, before continuing.

"She died, after saying that she was proud of me." Anakin said, his voice starting to have an edge of barely contained anger in his voice, scaring his former mentor and his apprentice, except Padme, who knew what had transpired in that day.

"Then, I took my lightsaber, and cut down the monsters that killed my mother." Anakin growled. The Jedi and Anakin's closest friends, aside from Padme, stared in shock. Ahsoka, Obi-Wan and Siri were caught in various stages of shock. For Siri, the thought that the young boy who accompanied Obi-Wan in his youth could do such a terrible and cold-hearted act of violence, despite the understanding of why the act was committed; for Ahsoka, she had looked up to her master as the brother she never had, and this confession alone blew all preconceptions of Anakin from her mind, and left only a cold bitterness in its wake; but for Obi-Wan, he knew his brother might have been swayed by the Dark Side multiple times, only to discover he not only fell, but he crashed head first into the darkness.

He looked up to Anakin as more than a Jedi and even more than the Chosen One. He viewed Anakin as a brother. The sadness and grief Qui-Gon could be feeling if he ever saw or heard this was inconceivable.

"Not just the men," Anakin said in a fury, "But the women, and the children too! They were animals, AND I SLAUGHTERED THEM LIKE ANIMALS." Anakin snarled. If the people in attendance were shocked before, they were scared now, even the doctors in charge of this group session.

All except Lance, who knew far too well how the young man fell.

After all, he himself was in a position not too different from Anakin's years ago.

Anakin calmed down to see many of the Jedi and doctors in attendance looking at him as though he was a Krayt Dragon. Anakin bowed his head. He had just confessed mass murder to everyone in attendance, to his brothers and sisters no less.

After a tense silence, the entire room was filled with enough noise to fill markets in Tatooine. It was uproar, with Anakin bombarded with questions and accusations. Anakin turned to his closest confidants, and even they were still in shock over Anakin's actions. Ahsoka looked lost, Siri was pained, and Obi-Wan looked as though despair had overcome him. Only Padme remained with Anakin. He numbly saw Barriss struggling to maintain order but failing.

A gunshot rang out throughout the complex. Everyone suddenly turned to Lance's smoking Magnum pointing straight up and smoke coming out of the barrel, with crumbs of concrete raining down from the bullet hole in the ceiling.

"As much as I like people accusing each other of mass murder, this is not the way to solve things. I thought you Jedi knew better." Lance shook his head in disappointment.

Many of them calmed down, but they still held looks of contempt and some hint of anger in their expressions. A Chiss Jedi who was in attendance looked at Lance with his fierce red eyes and said, "How

can we calm down if this man," he pointed at Anakin, "who is supposed to be the Chosen One, just happens to slaughter a whole camp of Tusken Raiders? Sure they were evil, but they were all cut down by our own like a Sith! Who's to say he won't fall to the dark side as well? IF he does, we could fall with him." He argued.

That speech reignited the whole argument. This time, half sided with Anakin, another wanted his head on a platter, metaphorically speaking. Lance grumbled.

"Doctors, please turn away." He warned, before he pulled out a flashbang grenade.

Glenda, knowing how Lance easily has the tendency to be physical in any given argument, sighed. "Is that really necessary? Jedi are diplomats too, Commander." Glenda worked with Lance when she was treating Spartans. Glenda was the soothing voice, Lance was the muscle in case they got physical. Sometimes he was the one doing the talking in the sessions. Glenda was impressed with Lance's ability to help others, when she herself knows that Lance has more debilitating problems than standard PTSD.

Still, his ability to calm a tense situation is still comparable to using a MAC gun to open a locked wooden door.

Lance said with annoyance in his voice. "Diplomacy has failed." Lance simply said, before tossing the grenade in the crowd after cooking it in his hands. He immediately assembled his helmet while the doctors ducked. Some Clones noticed it and warned the other Jedi, but they were too busy arguing until the BANG of the grenade kicked in, rendering temporary blindness and deafness in equal amounts.

Most of the Jedi recovered quickly but the aftereffects kicked in for them, still keeping them dizzy until they recovered. They all glared at the Spartan responsible, who immediately retracted his helmet with a smug look on his face.

The Chiss from earlier rubbed his eyes furiously before turning to Lance. "Why did you do that?" He said slowly, hiding his frustrations underneath. He was not the only Jedi to do so, as many glared at the Spartan Commander who looked unfazed by the glaring given to him by the Jedi, except Skywalker, who looked on in confusion and slight shock.

Lance leaned in. "Because I want to prove a point. You are too embroiled on what should be, instead of what it is."

"What are you talking about?" Jade, who was also present and caught in the flashbang blast, recovered as well.

"Jedi have always had a high opinion of themselves. They believe they are invincible, and also incorruptible, that you are the high moral point the galaxy needs, when in reality, you are just as fallible as any other man and woman that lives and breathes in the galaxy. Anakin may be the Chosen one, but he can make mistakes too. That does not mean it should rule over their lives. You also made mistakes too." Lance said.

"What makes you so high and right? You don't know a thing about us!" A Human Male Jedi, sitting over at the far end, scoffed.

"And therein lays the arrogance, the same one that got your Temple up in smoke." Lance pointed out, with the Jedi looking a bit humbled. Some argued but their fellow Jedi silenced them, to allow Lance to speak. "There's an old Terran saying: Pride before the fall. You got a bit too proud, and the fall for you Jedi became very high as a result."

Many Jedi looked a bit humbled. In a sense, he was right.

"Okay, now about this problem, I might as well tell you my story. After all, he and I are not so different. I used to be exactly like him back then." Lance said, earning a look of surprise from Anakin, who then shrugged it off.

"I doubt you would have done the things I've done."

Lance leaned in, and said. "Well, stay awhile and listen. You may be surprised what I have to say."

All the while, Lance was thinking_ I wonder how Fireteam Napalm's doing? Hopefully, they aren't up to any deep trouble._ Putting that thought behind him, he began to recollect his memories, back to the days of his years as a Headhunter.

****AND FINALLY!** It took me 3 revisions and 1 complete rewrite, but Finally, I got it! I am also playing Bioshock Infinite and StarCraft II: Heart of the Swarm, so updates will be longer than usual.**

****Imaginary cookies if anyone can spot references.****

****Now, here is my signature second story in addition to this one.****

Awakening

{Unknown UNSC Medical Facility, Milky Way Galaxy}

Master Chief Petty Officer Spartan 117 woke up with a start.

He was wearing nothing more than simple silk pants and shirt, used for patients in hospitals.

He had a spinning headache, and suddenly threw up. The after effects of cryo sleep were rolling over the Spartan. He adjusted to the lighting quickly, and saw he was in a medical facility, probably inside a ship. He began to see some UNSC logos in some nearby terminals, and breathed a sigh of relief that he did not land in an ONI facility. He regained his sense, and began to remember prior to his cryo sleep.

He, Blue team, Grey Team, and Spartan IV teams Crimson and Majestic had orders from then Captain Lasky to rescue Doctor Halsey from Jul' Mdama, leader of the Storm Covenant. Jul was eliminated by the Spartans, but their prize was snatched by ONI spooks, who tailed them. Despite their programmed loyalty, they were not about to leave the Doctor in the hands of ONI, they went after her for 20 bitter years. Despite the long amount of time spent in this, medical technology had been amped up by Forerunner tech, so anyone in their

60s could still look and move as though they were still in their 20s.

Finally finding her with the help of Cortana, he and the Spartans assaulted the Darkness Falls base only to find out that Osman had set her trap: All her enemies in one place to wipe them off as she planned to decompress the whole facility, but she did not count on Halsey's ruthlessness and determination to end ONI, and she did so with the only thing she knew how: Expose the Spartan II program, effectively blowing the lid off the Spartan project and ending ONI. Despite her best efforts, Halsey managed to get her revenge, and used the cryo tubes in the facility to escape certain death.

Now, he was awake, and no way of knowing what has happened.

"Fred? Kelly? Dr. Halsey? Cortana?" John called out, but received only silence. He heard footsteps, and assumed the worst. He quickly got surveyed the room, and saw a nearby mirror in the bathroom. He took a pillow and put over the mirror before giving a quick tap, with a muffled crunch sound from behind it. John took out the broken glass. It would do.

He began to lie and wait for anyone to come along to check him out. He heard heavy footsteps outside his door. Too loud to be any normal person, and too precise to be an ODST. It must be a Spartan. He then heard the hissing sound of his door opening. He saw a heavily armored Spartan, sans the helmet. John then noticed it was a she, with rather stunning red hair and blue eyes that seem to illuminate in the dark. He heard her sigh, and then she walked into the room, with her hands up as a sign of surrender.

Cautiously, yet swiftly, Master Chief closed the door behind him and held the jagged glass to her throat. No surprise, she was calm. After all, Spartans never balk, even in the face of death.

"Who are you? Where am I?" John asked in a rapid fire, yet deep tone of voice. He knew the Spartan can catch on, since she seemed to surrender even though she saw the room.

"Spartan N-657 Sofia Hendriks, callsign "Firebrand", captain of Spartan IV Fireteam Napalm, Lost Legion. And you are in the UNSC Save my Son, on its way to Reach. Authorization code JH-456-5TR." She droned, as though the act of saying it bores her. "I must admit, I am honored to meet you, even though you have a rather sharp object of my jugular." She said, with honest admiration lacing her voice.

John held the makeshift knife for awhile, before he put it down, and dropped it. Sofia turned around, and smiled at him. Despite being held at knifepoint, she was rather optimistic for a Spartan.

"Well, it isn't everyday I get to meet a legend." She smiled. John nodded his head in acknowledgement.

"Sorry for that." He said simply.

"Apology accepted." Sofia said, then walked past her and motioned for him to follow.

"Where are we going?" He asked.

"To the briefing room. I trust that you would want to wait for your friends to wake up. They're still in sleep; In fact, I'm surprised that you woke up 12 hours before everyone else." She commended the Chief. "Your reputation precedes you, Master Chief. You truly are the luckiest one."

He scoffed slightly. "We make our own luck."

"Whatever you say, big man. We'll stop by the cafeteria first. I imagine that you need something for food." She said.

John would have refused, but his body, despite the augmentations, gave in to the starvation, so John complied with her, and went to the cafeteria.

3 hours later, the Spartan II's all gathered in the cafeteria, eating up rations a bit hungrily. They were introduced to Spartan IV Fireteam Napalm, consisting of their Leader, Sofia Hendriks, Medic/Hacker Thomas "Smooth" McQueen, Sniper Hong Kwun Yin "Earth Lion", Heavy Weapons/Demolitions specialist Eliza "Voodoo" Klien, and Scout Jason "Gladius" Wisterfield.

They all met up with Spartan II Grey Team, and then a few hours later, they met up with Spartan IV Team Majestic and Crimson, and after 2 more hours, Dr. Halsey woke up too.

Master Chief gave his rather rare smiles for Dr. Halsey, with some of his colleagues doing the same.

"I'm glad to see you too, John." Halsey greeted.

Chief then remember one more thing. "Where's Cortana."

Halsey's small smile then curved downwards. It was more than 20 years now, so the probability of her existing up until now would be non-existent. Yet, it was Thomas who answered the Chief.

"Normally, all these years would have caused your AI to destabilize into rampancy." He said, causing some small speck of fear for his long companion's state. He braced for the worst news, but Thomas gave the more surprising answer.

"But, thanks to the Janus Key and the Absolute Record," Thomas said, glancing to Doctor Halsey, "we are able to use that and find Forerunner tech across the Milky Way. These technologies also include enhancing AI lifespans. Get my drift?" He suggestively said, with Master Chief's eyes went wide. A rare form of shock slightly appearing on his features, before he controlled it down under, to which the IIs and Halsey catches on, and seemed to breathe a sigh of relief.

Hoya, Fireteam Majestic's CQC/Demolition Specialist, decided to ask something for the lot of them. "Okay, now that that's settled, y'all mind telling me where we going? And who you guys are? You ain't normal IV's, that's for sure. You guys ONI?" He asked suspiciously, with everyone else looking hard at them. Sofia sighed.

"We ain't ONI. As for that, we'll let CBMI explain that once we get to Reach." She said. Halsey voiced her thoughts of everyone in the room.

"Just who in the world is CBMI?" She asked in a rhetorical voice.

"Let's just say ONI screwed up with their secrets, such as the Spartan II project being leaked to the public." Hong, the sniper, said.

Halsey smiled slightly. Her revenge had come to pass. She was a rather reserved woman when it comes to success. This is among one of those time where she lets this one get to her head for once.

* * *

><p>{15 hours later, Reach}<p>

"I must say," Catherine Halsey said, taking a slight bite off a chocolate protein bar. "You CBMI really have spruced the place up." She said, noticing the memorial on the side of the ONI base. She saw her Spartans and some IVs were there both looking at it, or paying their respects, like Jai and Adrianna putting some dog tags near the memorial site.

It had been a mere 10 hours since arriving and they were all brought to a nearby barrack to recuperate. After everyone woke up, they were taken to the old ONI facility where the Spartans used to train. They saw the memorial site, and some Spartans, while they did not show it outright; felt a sense of gratitude that their fellow Spartans were honored like this. Even John, who held his personal motto of "No soldier should be rewarded for what is being expected of him", felt grateful that his brothers and sisters were honored for their sacrifices, and that they will never be forgotten.

So far, the group has only been able to catch up on calendar date, but so far, the other details were a bit mum. Even though most personnel respected them, they said that CBMI, the intelligence agency that replaced ONI, would be the ones to explain. According to the some marines they met, they were an improvement in terms of not trying to hoard power or actively trying to destabilize allies. Halsey smiled when she heard the news that Serin got her just reward for trying to screw her over.

Spartan IV Fireteam Crimson, consisting of Sniper Melissa Rodger, Leader Jack Turnbull, Demolitions/Heavy Weapons specialist Donnel Irons, and Ace Rick Horner took this with some stoicism only seem with twos, an observation Halsey made from just glancing at them. The other Spartan IV Fireteam Majestic took news of ONI's demise with mirth.

The two's simply stayed silent, although the slight shifts in their stances also indicated some manner of relief or joy to the demise of ONI, with Kelly most vocal about it.

The real surprise came when they saw Spartan III's, particularly Lucy and Tom. Both were happy to see their old friends and allies again. The shock came when they revealed that not only are they commanders, they were also married.

According to new UNSC rules and regulations, fraternizing was still a bit stiff, but now there was more freedom as it can be allowed so

long as it would take them off the front lines, due to their relationship and at their request as well. Halsey smiled at them, genuinely happy that they still lived. Tom and Lucy had the rings to prove it.

They led the time distorted Spartans, plus Halsey, to the inside, where it had been repurposed by CBMI for its intelligence briefings. Many of them, DeMarco and Fred especially, were surprised by CBMI's hospitality and lack of "bullshit" ONI had been known for.

"I'm kinda surprised this is the new group is our new head intelligence bureau after the Dragon Lady over there," Tedra Grant's thumb wavered over to Dr. Halsey, "brought them cloak and dagger bastards down to nothing. Guess that plan worked." She said to Halsey, who merely nodded.

When she and her teammates discovered Halsey, they were filled in on Halsey's plan to screw over Osman for her transgressions during their assault on Darkness Falls, and when they realized Osman might kill them off when she turned off the base's life support systems, they willingly helped Halsey, then used the Cryotubes as their last hope to stave off oxygen deprivation.

Now, they were being brought up to speed by CBMI, with their leader alongside current leading UNSC official, Admiral Lasky. Halsey, John, and the Spartan IVs were a bit pleased that Lasky became admiral in their wake, in fact, Madsen said "About damn time someone gave him keys to the kingdom."

Gabriel Thorne, a Spartan IV with luck of a 4 leafed clover, also said this "Well, no more ONI bullshit, that's for sure."

"You got that right brother." Rick Horner agreed with him.

"Okay, now." Sofia said, gaining the attention of the whole crowd. "We're about to start the debriefing, so everyone please take a seat at the holo table." She said, gesturing to the chairs around the glowing table.

They did so, and holograms began to pop out in to existence. Many were high ranking members that most did not know, but when the last figure materialized, most of them knew instantly. John immediately stood to attention and saluted.

"Captain Lasky." He greeted, with the others doing the same.

Lasky smiled a bit, and gestured the Spartans to lower their arms. "Its Admiral now, Chief, and I told you, I never get used to being called sir by you of all people." He reminded.

Halsey looked at him with an expression likened to being impressed. "Well, you certainly moved up in the world, Admiral."

"Well, I like to think that you might have done something like that when you screwed over Osman." A Russian accent permeated a room, and a bearded man with General accolades on his uniform stepped forward. Lasky then introduced them to General Chernof, Director of CBMI.

"Well, now that we have everyone here, let's bring everyone up to

speed. I got two UNSC AI, Hermes and York to give you the necessary information about the recent times, and our status in Andromeda." Lasky said.

Everyone remained silent as a man in greek attire and a man in a 19th century suit, Hermes and York respectively, began uploading data to the holo table.

General Chernof then began "So, shall we begin?"

****THAT'S IT! We'll continue that next time, along with Commander Escandor's undercover mission that hit too close to home for him.****

****I've noticed you guys don't give me a lot of reviews, so please just review this one.****

7. Episode 7

****AND I AM ALIVE! It has been a while, since I was too busy playing Bioshock Infinite and StarCraft II: Heart of the Swarm, Plus I have college research. So Sorry for the wait. Enjoy this next chapter . Did I also mention WarFrame, Metro: Last Light, and Max Payne 3 may have a hand in that.****

****Edit: I have been delayed for so long since my grades are at the brink. Sorry for the delays. This took so long because I had to rewrite 3 scenes completely, plus I was still acting on advice from NIGHTSTALKER.****

****WARNING! The Following scenes detail a disturbing twist involving the use of torture on minors. If you think this is excessive, please tell me so that I can edit them as soon as possible. This is my hardest chapter to write ever. ****

****And starting next chapter, I will shorten the stories considerably, but maintain their two-story structure, in lieu of more frequent updates. Thank you for your consideration.****

Episode VII – And the Skeletons we Bury.

{Undisclosed location, July 25, 2605, Past}

A dimly lit room with a holotable being the only light in the whole room was empty, until a man in a grey military outfit enters and heads over to the holotable. He types something on it, and then a hologram of another man, but his figure was more of a shadow than an actual man. The uniformed man knew that his position was rather precarious from where he was, so used a blinder program to hide his true appearance.

"Challenge: The Sun is shining." The Man in shadow said, his synthesized voice covering his true voice.

"Callsign: The Ice is slippery." The Man in uniform answered.

"What's the situation over there?" The man in shadow asked.

"Not good, we have learned that a few cells were discovered already over the past 3 months. I dare say that we may have a leak in our department." The Shadowed man admitted.

The man in Uniform contemplated. While still in the infancy, an Insurrection in the colony world of Sentosa was brewing. It began when a man by the name of Nick Russo, a former Insurrection of the now defunct Koslovics Insurrection Faction, fled under the alias of Rick Summers to Sentosa, a UNSC colony ruled by a rather corrupt official that seemed to be untouchable, due to his former connections to ONI. With ONI gone, the official was now jailed, but the damage was done, and Nick seemingly rallied the populace to open revolt.

Many in the UNSC and TUG feared a return of the Insurrection, but took note that not all in Sentosa followed Nick Russo's group, who took residence at another part of the continent, now under UNSC control. The Insurrection and the UNSC clashed, but ultimately a stalemate was now hovering over the colony. While Spartans could be sent in, intel reports suggest that Russo may have an advanced sensor array capable of pinpointing a Prowler in his camp, and even worse, ex-ONI turncoats who were rather displeased that the UNSC destroyed their people.

Because of these intelligence advantages, any direct attack would be thwarted. 2 Marine squads went KIA and even a whole squad of Spartan IVs went MIA as a result. CBMI was able to indicate that some Spartan IVs who were identified as the former part of Kilo-5, an ONI branch dedicated to destabilizing the allies of the UNSC, namely the Sangheili.

Now, CBMI sent their people in, and despite their best efforts, were still caught, which led to the man in uniform, a CBMI official, talking to the agent, who was in shadow, about their current predicament. The agent was using an advanced scrambler to mask his appearance and voice in the event that they were bugged. The tag for the man in shadow was only named as "Unknown", while the uniformed man was named "Enigma". Enigma knew that this scrambler worked both ways, so he sees a shadow, the agent too sees shadow.

"We've been working on our end, but so far nothing." Enigma said. "I suspect it's coming on yours."

Unknown grunted. "We got our hands too full to look into this leak. I suspect ONI, but I believe that some sympathizers are in the UNSC side of this colony."

"We'll look into it. For now I suggest you continue gathering intel on Russo's plans. No doubt he isn't planning to stay long in Sentosa." Enigma said, but Unknown shook his head, or whatever passed for as a head.

"Negative, we are blown. As we speak, we are cleaning up and heading out. We've been made, so all assets are ordered to bug out. Our intelligence was bust."

"Then we have only one last optionâ€¦"

"Sir, with all due respect, we have nothing else. Nuking it would be-" Unknown was interrupted when Enigma raised his hand.

"I didn't say anything about nuking it. I'm talking about a rather special individual who was with us since the beginning of this bloody situation." Enigma said which garnered confusion for Unknown.

"Who is it, sir? I was not informed of any additional assets in the area."

"A headhunter, one good in infiltration and working as a double agent within the group. He and his team were inserted during the attacks on the main capital, New Sundersfield."

"Sir, a Spartan team would have been detected at this point, and the only known Spartan team is--"

"--MIA, I know. Officially, they are MIA."

"And Unofficially?"

"They've been keeping in touch with us, but because of their position, are unable to contact you."

Unknown was silent for a while, before asking. "You think it's possible that they're the culprits responsible for blowing our cover?"

Enigma shook his head. "Negative, they're the ones that gave you that info in the first place. They also placed that memo about the turncoat's moles within. They gave the report to me first, then onto you."

Unknown then asked one final question. "How sure are you of their loyalty?"

Enigma simply gave him a nod. "Simple. His brother told him so."

Unknown then realized WHO this person was. "Isn't it a bit risky? He maybe the best man for the job, but he tends to get attached. Emotions can easily interfere with better judgment."

"We have no choice. If he is as good as he claims he is, Escandor will have to do the job."

{New Sundersfield, Sentosa}

"All callsigns, Sound off."

"Indian 1, ready."

"Indian 2, ready."

"Indian 3, ready."

"Overlord, all callsigns ready."

"Begin Surveillance, now!"

At once, 4 men began to come out of their hiding spots and began walking amongst the crowd, with some civilian clothes on and a rather

sophisticated eye piece on their eyes. Normally, they would have been spotted, but CBMI had been busy with their spy business. A column of Insurrection militia and defunct Scorpion tanks rolled past the busy intersection, with a fancy looking car in the middle. It was an old limo, similar in shape to what the old United States President rode in during car visits.

These were no normal men, but Spartans, who were inserted in when the first wave came in. Faking their demise, they made their way into the city to work with UNSC sympathizers, gathering intelligence and some of them infiltrating some groups of the Insurrection. Working under the pseudonym of "Indian Squad"

The group was equipped with advanced sensory and camouflage equipment before they crashed and pre-existing safehouses that were built in case of a situation such as this. Only the group knew, so any worries of the mole tracking them down were slim, at best.

Right now, they were simply running surveillance, a routine that has gone on for 3 months now. Already, they have uncovered the presence of moles within the UNSC, with one Innies spilling his intel after one too many beers. Now they were on the hunt for Russo's endgame, with the realization that they may have to take direct action if this was to end swiftly.

After one whole day of observation nothing else but troop movement, the team headed back to their safe houses in the northwestern part of New Sundersfield.

"Well, that was a bust." Innies-1 remarked dryly.

"I don't know about you guys, but they seem remarkably patient for an Insurrection. Something's off about all this troop movement."

Overlord turned to them and replied. "Remember Headhunters, while we may be CBMI's scalpel, we can be just as adept as their spies. We're here to gather info first, so that when we take that asshole out, he isn't pulling an ace out of thin air when he does, clear?"

A chorus of affirmatives rang throughout the room. Overlord then began to take his cloak and headed for the door.

Innies-2 sighed. "Tell me he's not seeing that girl again."

Innies-3 just nodded, and Innies-2 groaned. Innies-1 was more direct and questioned his officer. "Is that wise, sir? I know this kid's innocent, but you know we shouldn't be emotionally tied into our work. It never ends well for all parties involved. Besides, she might give us away."

Overlord looked at his subordinate. "She's given me a lot to think about, besides, she's also one of my contacts, since her dad's part of Russo's inner circle. Andâ€¦"

"And what?" Innies-1 asked, gesturing him to continue.

"And the fact that she deserves better." Overlord finished, turning his back and heading out the door.

Innie-2 looked a bit frustrated. "He's gone native, or about to."

Innie-3, however, had a different opinion. "I've seen that girl, 2. And trust me when I say, he really wants to help this girl out, perhaps everyone other unfortunate soul here caught up by Russo."

"We're not human rights, 3; we're Headhunters, Spartan IV's, for god's sake. We're trained to take lives, not comfort them."

Innie -1 was observing this back-and-forth debate until he had enough of them. "Alright, now calm down everyone. Now, I understand your concerns. Frankly, I think this is a good course of action. If we can win over more people on our side, then we can take Russo's support from right under him." He told his comrades.

Innie-2 didn't buy it. "You're just rationalizing the whole issue, but that's beyond the point." He snapped. "

"Then what is?"

"How this will all end badly for him when everything goes south." Innie-2 said.

"You think we'll fail this? We're good in what we do, so any possible problems can be countered with all contingencies in place. I thought you knew that."

Innie-3 cut in their conversation "Any plan can go wrong. After all, "No plan survives first contact with the enemy." I thought you knew that by now?"

Innie-1 was hopeful for better things, however. "Your pessimism is noted, Innie-2. Now get back to work."

Seeing that continuing this conversation will get nowhere, the 3 men dispersed to their different tasks. They maybe CBMI's secret weapon, but they were men before they were Spartans, so if they would be conflicted with their duties and emotions, then things would go bad for the plan to stop Russo. Innie-1 trusted Lance would not do anything stupid if it really did come to pass.

{Central New Sundersfield, 10 minutes later.}

A large man stepped off the local transports, and walked over to the suburbs area. He walked a little way until he reached a small area of housing complexes that stretched for at least 5 kilometers. He went to the tallest one and began to climb up swiftly, and in covert.

When he got to the roof, he opened a maintenance hatch, and knocked down on it in a pitter patter motion. He waited for a sound coming from below. After a few seconds, he heard the pitter-patter tapping from below. He smiled slightly, for that sound indicated that she was in.

He then used a service doorway to make his way down into the floor where she lived, on the 5th. He stood in front of a doorway, Room 512, and knocked. A young 14 year-old girl opened, she revealed

beautiful flowing dress that complimented her sky blue eyes. She smiled up at the man. "Greetings, Lance. I assume you want to meet with my sister?"

"If your father allows it, Myka." He replied with a small smile. The girl shook her head emphatically. "Come on in! I'm sure Malika would be happy to see you." He let himself in.

The place Myka called home was modest, and slightly roomy for at least 6-8 people to live in. Lance walked over to the balcony, where he found a young girl drawing on a holopad. She looked up at him and she practically leapt in the air for joy. "Lance!" She yelled, before tackling the large man, who caught her in mid air. He smiled warmly at her.

They spent the next day chatting it up, talking about how they day was and how good they were behaving. Lance smiled sadly. If he knew what would happen next, he would have took the kids and pulled out. He then took them out for ice cream, whilst giving Malika a bracelet of a bird, and Myka, a necklace that had a cage decoration. And most of all, enjoying the company the two girls gave him, as it reminded him of a childhood he fondly remembers back at his home.

{Glinn's Field, Present}

Lance had been recounting his time on Sentosa, who was now on the part where he met Malika.

"It had been more than 3 months ago that I met her and her sister during their first few weeks undercover. Still blending in, I found her being relentless bullied by some Innies, with her sister about to get raped. She was crying and I was not about to part about to let her kick the bucket, so I intervened." He emphasized the last word.

Jade, who had calmed down a bit, then asked "What happened next?"

"After that beat down, I managed to find some UNSC fatigues that were about to be burnt, and wore these on them, all the while claiming that these men were UNSC soldiers trying to hide. By the time they tried getting themselves out of the fire, they got shot by their fellow "brothers and sisters". So much for knowing your comrades. They hailed us instead, since we were wearing their little uniforms. As a result we got in, and our intelligence gathering was improved significantly. " He scoffed.

Trips was slightly impressed. Infiltrating the enemy while saving innocents; it was a very good combination. "Wouldn't you stand out with you being larger than normal people?"

Lance nodded. "Indeed, but I also saw some men who were just as tall as we were and asked if we used to be Spartans, since we ditched the armor and we already had residences in the city. We told them we used to and sold to them a sob story of how a Spartan tries to blend in society and fails at it due to a certain UNSC governor putting BS on us. They took it hook, line and sinker. And before you ask, CBMI set our stories straight, so if ONI tried to pry details from us, they'll get our fake UNSC files. Say what you will about the CBMI, they know their security well, so we were safe."

Ahsoka then asked Lance. "What about the girls?"

Lance looked at them. "I took them home, but we talked and talked on the way there. They warmed up to me after awhile. I wasn't supposed to, because our lives tended to end badly, and for those involved, just as much."

"What changed?"

"I bumped into them a few days afterwards, and seemed to tail me everywhere I went. Eventually I confronted them, and though I was adamant for them to return, I took them out for ice cream, or what remained a place for ice cream, since some innies had the "Common Sense" to set some parts of it to the fire."

"We talked and talked. I learned from them that their dad was part of Russo's inner circle, and suddenly I realized I could convince them to tell me more. But to my surprise, they clammed up, and demanded who I really was. I told them my name, but not the last name, so I assumed it was enough, but they knew I was not from around here, since most Sentosans usually have a certain smell on them that some children could smell, but I had only a faint smell. So, I told them."

Darman couldn't believe it. TO tell someone, in enemy territory no less, personal information was fatal. "Are you crazy? They could have told on you to their dad!"

Lance laughed mirthlessly. "That was the thing. They also told me that since their mother died, their dad was an alcoholic."

A series of "oh" was echoed throughout the room. Alcoholics make bad fathers; a universal fact whether it is in the Andromeda, or the Milky Way.

"As you can imagine, even children can turn on their parents, with enough beatings. The thing about that particular child beater is that, as much as he hated his kids, he loved his wife immensely."

Many were disbelieving. A Hateful father, but Loving Husband? Etain shook her head "How could that be? Surely if he loved the mother more than the daughters, then why didn't she stop him from hurting her own children?"

Lance shook his head sadly. "The mother fell ill, and the Father, in his great grief, used his children as stress relief, while he worked with Russo to help get her to proper medical facilities. She was simply too sick to stop him."

"Wasn't that an easy thing to do? Surely hospitals in Sundersfield were not completely devoid of medical supplies, regardless of the situation then?"

"That was before the Innies torched it. Claimed they were UNSC safehouses or strongholds, but in reality, they were setting themselves up as the sole medical contributor in the Insurrection held parts of Sentosa." Lance explained. Etain felt herself feel some semblance of anger like that, due to her own dilemma in her about her

role as a mother.

Many Jedi were now fully focused on Lance's story than Anakin's, to which the latter was grateful for.

The Padawan Pack was present amongst the session, sans Zule Xiss and A Gand Jedi by the name of Vaabesh, with the Former still with her boyfriend, Marik, from the Mandalorian PMC Ne'tra Kad, a group which was stationed alongside the Clone Defectors near the Orbital Elevator; and the latter off helping the Librarians arrange data in the info centers. They attended via Hologram.

The Zabrak of the group, Kass Tod, looked over to Lance, and asked him. "What did you do about it? Surely you would not abide to such cruelty."

Lance shook his head. "I gave him a warning when I first met him, although due to his position in Russo's command chain, he scoffed me off." Lance grimaced further. "I should have done more than that. Or I should have rendered him brain dead from the start."

Many Jedi did not like where this was going. Obi-Wan decided to let Lance continue his story.

"I gave them my first name afterwards, and opened up to them. It was risky, sure, but if I was to have the girls have a use in bringing down Russo, and hopefully their dad, I had to. Trust is a two way street. You can't have one without the other."

"But over time, I saw them as something else. I saw them as a last vestige of innocence that is slowly fading from that planet, as everyone else had either caved in and given in to the madness, or went with it from the start. It was slow at first, talking to each other, albeit secretly, since their dad was still wary about my presence. But soon after that, they called me "Brother." Lance smiled sadly, the memory of those girls coming back to him at full force.

"I really considered getting them away from there, set them up with a good family, but the logical side needs their inside help so that I can save lives, or at least, that's how I rationalized it." Lance said, sighing.

A Pantoran Jedi, Asumi Tsuchi, who was accompanied by a Mandalorian Shock trooper in a steel grey with green trim armor by the name of Besk Vorp (**AN: KUDOS to Patriot-112 for helping me make this character.)**, asked Lance. "But that was not the only reason for visiting them, wasn't it?" She asked warily. The Jedi was also in a relationship with the Mandalorian, but had suffered mental trauma when she saw some Jedi younglings burn in a Pelican after the Ion attack brought down the transport that was carrying them. She personally saw to their evacuation herself.

Lance nodded. She looked at the two, and was like looking at Daniel and Riyo.

"Anyways, they were also invaluable in our intelligence gathering. But it was still a dead end, until July 12, 2600. We had a lucky break, as Russo and HIS entire cabinet would be present, thanks again to Malika and Myka. It took us a long time to decide, but we went

there in the hopes to end it all, before it escalated. It was almost too good to be true." Lance scoffed. "Almost."

Anakin then filled the gaps in. "It was an ambush, wasn't it?" His expression now looking more of understanding, rather than the sadness and guilt he had earlier on.

Lance could only nod, as he told the full story.

{Fort Suez, 20 miles outside New Sundersfield, July 13, 2600}

The team was under cover of darkness, waiting for the warthogs to pass by, before Innie-2 threw a small airplane from his hand and activated his Peregrine UAV, used for surveillance and sometimes, painting targets for artillery and air strikes. The small machine then began to circle the fort. As it did, 4 heavily armored figures uncloaked from the shadows.

"Overwatch, can you confirm visual, over?" Overlord asked on his comms. He was connected to HQ on Sentosa, albeit momentarily. It was a risk, but if this was their opportunity to stop the Insurrection from spreading further, then there was no holding back on their punches.

"Copy, Overlord. Be advised: We have spotted multiple artillery platforms of unknown origin. I need you and your team to get in there and sabotage those guns before proceeding to Primary. It is advisable to also take down those jammers near the northwestern part of the base. Once those are down, we can have our Frigates some targets to light up. Also, we got some Vampires, callsigns Guardian 2 and Guardian 3, are gonna serve as your panic button in case things go south. Be advised that as soon as you enter the camp, all our transmissions are cut, and you are on your own. Acknowledged, Overlord?"

"Acknowledged." Was Overlord's only reply, before cutting the link. He then turned to the rest of his squad. "Alright, here's the plan." He then activated his TACPAD, showing a 3d map of the base in their HUD's. "Innie-1, you take out the AA's, Innie-2, the Jammers are your responsibility. Innie-3 is with me going into the Barracks areas. Those Spartan IVs are still the main concern for us, so we're gonna 'fix' their armor. We'll then move out to " He said, holding a few grenades to emphasize his point.

They all set out doing their assigned tasks, with Overlord silently thanking Myka and Malika for their help. Using M9 Caseless SMGs with Suppressor and holoscopes, they moved to their respective assignments, cloaking as they advanced swiftly and silently,

If this whole thing went without a hitch, they could end this war before it escalated further.

{30 minutes later}

When the Jammers finally turned off, Overlord ordered a sound-off.

"Overlord, this is Innie-1. AA guns are now disabled. Moving to Primary."

"This is Innie-2. Jammers are now useless. Planted a virus and will spread when someone activates the console. They are turned off at the moment, but as soon as someone turns it on, they're screwed."

"This is Overlord. Innie-3 and I have just finished turning the Spartan IV armor set into a useless pile of metal. They may need to wear some ODS armor at this rate."

"Alright, 1 and 2, proceed to primary, 3 meet with you there. I'm gonna hack into the artillery and see if I can't cause them to misfire into the camps."

"Roger that." Came the reply, and Lance was on his own again.

So far, nothing went wrong, and it was all according to plan. Yet, Lance had a nagging sensation, one you get when you're standing a train tracks and feeling the vibrations of an incoming train. Nevertheless, he pushed on, knowing that anything can happen.

He cut through some service areas, taking down (non-lethally) guards who could risk his cover. He then proceeded into a medical hub, where he overheard two guards talking to one another.

"So how much longer? All this infernal waiting is killing me." A young Insurrectionist asked.

"According to Jameson, the Phosphorous we loaded up in those artillery shells are being loaded as we speak. As soon as the word is given, we burn the UNSC from this world, literally." An older Insurrectionist told him. As he was doing this, he was unaware that Lance was outside, listening in.

Lance narrowed his eyes at this. Phosphorous was essentially banned from any form of combat for centuries, since such weapons would cause pain beyond necessary justification. If Russo was planning to use this, he is really serious in his goal to kill the UNSC.

"But what about their ships? Surely they'll bomb us from the sky as soon as we waste their ground forces."

"We came prepared for that too. The Thermobaric Missiles that Miles was able to procure from this base should reduce a cruiser to space dust and its EMP will cripple the rest. We'll then use the Pelicans to board them and we'll be out long before a retaliatory strike can be done."

"If you say so." They began talking about mundane stuff that Lance was not interested in hearing. Seeing as though they have nothing else to give, Lance prepared to move, but a Warthog convoy was passing by, leaving Lance to wait. They left after a few minutes.

Just as Lance was about to sneak off, he heard something that made his blood go cold.

"What about those UNSC Spartans that are still spying on us from the city?" Lance thought he heard wrong, but the next few sentences disproved that.

"According to Michael," Lance knew that name; the "father" of Malika

and Myka. "they have been in the city for weeks, listening in, trying to get intel on us. Hell, they even used his daughters to help them, and they're doing so willingly. I assume that Michael has plans for his children when we find those Spartans." Lance's heart was now beating faster than what was possible.

He had many horrible scenarios of those two girls being stoned, shot or even raped by the enemy, under a man that should have protected them, not sold them out. He put those feelings aside, though, and proceeded to the artillery lines.

He had heard enough. He tried getting his men on the horn, trying to warn them and abort. No dice, all he was met was static. Worst-case scenario, they have been noticed, and waiting for all of us to take the trap. But Lance decided to take the initiative and press on.

First the artillery, then he'll take care of the girls, and then, moving on to Russo. Hopefully, they're all grouped together, would save me the trouble of finding each of them before I get them, Lance thought.

He proceeded to the so-called "Artillery Line," where an armored line of missile platforms, all armed to the brim with sophisticated hardware, mixed with homemade ingenuity, were all there. The Artillery itself would not need human aid, since it can all be done remotely from a distance. The Artillery, while it normally needed human assistance, seemed to be modified for a more remote use. The computer would target and fire, but it would also need human aid to reload and fine-tune the line of sight. Lance realized that hacking them all individually would take too long, but the secondary explosives wouldn't, so he did those first.

Once that was done, he searched the place for any nearby console that could, hopefully, direct him to the main console used to control the artillery remotely.

The main console was located in a fortified bunker, surrounded by antiquated Scorpion Tanks and some Gauss Machine Guns on the top of the entrance to seal off the main entrance inside. Looking around, he noticed a small supply cache about to be loaded in the bunker. Thinking fast, he jumped inside and hoped his camo can blend in long enough and fool the sensors.

It was guarded with at least 3 sentry gun, an engineer, and some heavies, wearing body-hugging heavy armor, (or at least as heavy as it can be for normal humans), alongside 6 regular Innies wearing body armor. As tempting as it was to pick them off one by one, he knew that he had to be a ghost: in, out, and nothing dead in between. Lance saw some cameras and waited until the camera's lens were facing away from him, then he left.

It was relatively easy to fool the human guards, but the sentries were dicey. He had to avoid them until he found a way to bypass them safely. He was able to use some stuff on the table and threw it in a random direction, creating some distractions that made the sentries turn to the direction, since most of them are sound-reliant.

Once he got through he made his way across winding staircases and long hallways before getting to the main console room, with only an

engineer inside. Lance knew that if he knocked this man out, people might get suspicious that the artillery was tampered, but not doing so would have every second tick down going against his men, and the children he held dear.

As luck would have it, a transmission called the engineer away for some maintenance. While Lance was rather fortunate to have the engineer leave, something was off. It was coincidence, but the timing was rather convenient, at least, that was what Lance thought. He had the tendency to think beyond the box, where most people classify it as paranoia.

You're overreacting. Calm down.

Double checking the room, he was able to spot a surveillance camera, and knew that time was against him, so he activated a small EMP device that would, while temporarily, give him a window of opportunity.

Even without an AI, Spartan IV's are sometime trained to help breach enemy firewalls in the event nothing else will. Lance was rather shocked their security was less tight, but then again, he knew the operating system was rather outdated. It took him less than 30 seconds to breach. Afterwards, he planted his sleeper programs to await his command. His Neural Lace will inform him, since it was the only piece of equipment not bolted on his armor that he can manipulate.

Still paranoid Lance thought to himself.

Again, pushing his doubts aside, he moved on to the rendezvous. If it really was a setup, then he might as well try and save them from the fire.

Reaching to the building where the leaders gathered, Overlord moved to the back entrance and setup a spot where he can access the security network of the building, since most of the security gadgets in it are self-contained, meaning it was isolated from the main grid.

Once inside, he was able to hack the cameras and soon was able to discern three things: 1.) His team was safe, but the speed of their progress was rather suspicious, as though someone let them in, which led to; 2.) The leaders are sitting down, looking at a screen with his team as the main topic of their discussion, with Russo himself allowing Fireteam Indian to pass, which he began to bark orders into his comms, and led to; 3.) A fully armored Spartan IV team in Onyx armor who are waiting the next room for Indian to pass.

But worse, was when two Insurrectionist militia flanked two handcuffed and blindfolded children. And he recognized the bracelet on one of them, the older one. He should know, since he gave it to her.

Malika and Myka. No doubt here to use as leverage against the Spartans, no less. He growled deeply. _This asshole of a dad is going to get his own personal coffin when I'm through with him._ Overlord thought furiously as the children were led, forcefully into an area where the cameras could not follow.

Overlord was now in a dilemma, with the situation deteriorating fast, especially when Russo realized the team was missing one Spartan.

Lance knew that he can't go in one place and take out one group of enemies without alerting the other. And the fact that those children were in danger amplified the tension that was growing in him.

So Lance was stuck, for a few moments, and after weighing in the risks, he knew what to do. He would have to move fast when he did.

He grabbed his gun and head into the building, specifically, the wing of the building which the trap is being set.

{2 minutes later}

Overlord had finally reached the room in time. His team was sidetracked when they found some intel and took them a while to download. That left the ONI Spartan IV team time to prepare. Unfortunately, they were so focused on what was coming through the door that they did not check what was coming from behind them.

Overlord had heard reports that ONI Spartan IVs were slightly more ruthless and had a knack of being overconfident. Clearly, CBMI was not wrong with their intel.

As he slowly moved with small steps to close the distance between him and the ONI team, he heard two members, a female and a male, arguing.

"-that's enough, Sofia! We knew that when you joined this outfit, you knew that our work would dabble in something like this." The male argued.

"I joined this outfit when I was approached by ONI. Even though they had questionable methods, they still served the good of the populace. But now, using phosphorus? I mean what the hell? We're supposed to b-"she was interrupted by the male.

"ENOUGH! We're on the run from the UNSC, and that means we're entailed to doing everything we can to make sure they don't put us in front of a firing squad, so don't bitch about us using phosphorus-based weaponry, because as cruel as it is, we need it to get past the damn blockade floating above our heads; since they'll be too busy with our nukes and the EMP frying their systems, with the phosphorus occupying the ground troops. It's us or them, Hendrik. You do well to remember that." The Male said with authority.

"I joined this outfit when ONI recruited me, and I'm only here now, because CBMI will turn this into a witch hunt, and I know that once they have us, they'll burn us at the stake, John. I was dragged by some ONI spooks when they became turncoats and most of my fellow recruits left, leaving a few of us, including me, behind to follow you, because I knew we could have been framed for something. When I found out, I was mad, just like you were, but I still kept my peace. We may be ONI Spartans, a cut above the average Spartan stock," Sofia said, taking her helmet off, revealing striking blue eyes and fire red hair. "But that does not mean we have the right to be judge, jury

and executioner, Razer. Especially since there are innocent people just behind the UNSC frontlines." Lance was rather surprised with that. He knew that some ONI spooks turned on the group when the scandal came out, but it seemed as though this woman's case was a "wrong place, wrong time" situation.

The Man took his helmet off, revealing a bald man with dark eyes, with an eagle skewered by a trident tattooed on the back of his head. "Listen here, Sofia, because I will only say this once. We are Kilo-5, formerly, ONI's destabilization squad. We have done more inhumane things worse than this, Sofia. We did this once to ensure UNSC's survival and dominance, but now, we're doing this for ourselves AND as our survival. So until you have assurance that the UNSC does not crucify us Ex-ONI for our involvement, then you are free to walk through the door. Until then," He put his helmet back on. "You follow orders. Is that clear?" He growled.

Sofia frowned deeply, but shook her head and looked his superior officer straight in the eye. "Yes, sir."

Razer nodded slightly. "Good, now let's go greet our guests hi." And prepared to ambush the UNSC Spartans, unaware that the extra Spartan in the room heard the whole thing.

Lance heard the whole thing, and pulled up her file through the Neural Lace. Once he finished reading her file, Lance had a decision to make yet again.

While it was true her flags waved ONI, she had her doubts, and she was a simple recruit, with no true inner workings with ONI, at least not officially. Judging from her tone earlier, he surmised that she has finally grown tired of the cloak and dagger tactics ONI was infamously known for, yet continues on knowing that her return could get her an instant crucifixion.

While a normal Spartan would simply shrug at this and go gung-ho on the UNSC's enemies, Lance was much different than them. He was rather fond of talking things out instead of killing everything that required a bullet to the head. And sometimes, he was also known to do both. Talk and Gun Diplomacy, most Spartans described Lance's approach to combat. Sometimes he manages to talk them down like a trainer negotiator, sometimes, he simply gets tired and blasts his way through.

Right now, he was going to do both, assuming that after he does this, his intended person did not die in the process.

{After 1 second}

Everything went crazy for Sofia in just seconds after she'd argued with Razer.

A Large figure in blue just flew out of nowhere and gave a swift roundhouse kick to Zeke, the sniper, and smashing his helmet and sent him flying over the railing to the floor below. The assailant also blew up the security cameras since they are sparks flying from remote corners in the room to coincide with his entrance.

Everything went in a blur for her after that. She vaguely heard a warning of UNSC, before the assailant knocked her silly and threw her

off the balcony too.

She heard bells ringing, and even with her augmentations, her enemy must have hit her with a MAC Round for her to be disorientated for so long. She saw hazy figures fighting back and forth and she tried to reach for her gun, and lo and behold, it was gone.

Groaning, she tried moving and saw three figures against only one assailant, to her surprise. The fact that this particular enemy was still standing and even holding his ground against his colleagues. She then saw Zeke's sniper rifle lying nearby. Hopefully, her teammates would distract him long enough for her to get the gun and shoot the bastard.

So far, the battle was in the favor of the ONI Spartans, slowly but surely backing the lone Spartan up the wall. They had to admit, for him to slowly hold his ground against 3 well trained Spartans was something to be commended, but they were confident that this particular Spartan had bit off more than he could chew.

At least, that is what they thought.

While it was true that ONI Spartans are elite SOBs, Lance did not get his position by playing fair. He saw out of the corner of his eye, that Sofia was inching herself closer to the sniper rifle, and decided to break all pretense of being the weak one. He deliberately made mistakes during his melee with the ONI spooks to lure them in a false sense of superiority, which Lance brought down on a button switch.

Right before he came to the ambush point, Lance planted at least 3 C-12 explosives in the room closest to the ex-ONI trap. He also planted some close-by to facilitate the distraction. Obviously, that would mean Russo's trap was about to go sideways, but then Overlord and his team's cover would be blown. Since the explosives are right behind the wall he was backed up to, he was now in the best, yet riskiest area of the room.

Better now than later, Lance thought.

Throughout the building, Large explosions rocked the building, and the force of such explosives was great, even the conference room holding the leaders was shattered, pelting its occupants with rubble flying at bullet speeds, doing damage and creating the opening Lance needed.

Everything went slower when he activated his suit's adrenaline injectors, which, combined with the famous "Spartan Time" Reaction process, made everything slow to near stop.

The room they were in now shook and at once, Lance immediately ducked and the explosives shattered the wall behind him and due to the high concentration of C-12 in the vicinity, it flew like small shrapnel, with enough force to bring a Warthog into the scrap pile.

First, the Shockwave and initial debris took out the shields of the 3 Onyx colored Spartans, but when secondary explosives went off, the fast flying-shrapnel damaged their armor, and worse, some of them hit at the more vulnerable sides of the armor, mainly the neck, which was apparent when Overlord got up and saw 3 Spartans clutching their

necks as they were bleeding out. He heard a door burst open and Fireteam Indian rushed in, with Innies-2 in the lead.

"Well boss, I have to say," He started, jerking his thumb to the now dead Onyx Spartans, "you really like to go for the anti-climactic."

"I'm a Spartan, One, not a showman. If you want a prolonged and overly exaggerated duel, then I suggest you go find Rambo, since you might enjoy something there." Lance quipped sarcastically. "I don't fight fair in fights you can't win, especially against ONI."

"Fair enough." was Innies-1's only reply.

Combing the room, they found a conscious, yet wounded Sofia still recovering from the aftershock of the blast. Innies-2 was about to blast her to kingdom come when Lance stopped him. Her leg was stuck under a large metal beam that collapsed and pinned her down, leaving her virtually helpless without any weapon.

While two did not say anything, his posture indicated confusion, as with the rest of his team.

Overlord shook his head and simply knelt down to look her in the eye. She had fire in her blue eyes that was for sure.

"If you are gonna kill me, just do it. No need to prolong anything. Unless you're here so that you can beat whatever info I have, just make it quick." Sofia said defiantly. Lance, for all his cunning and viciousness in war (at least, that's what he tells himself in a mirror when he is alone), spoke to her.

"No, because you know something I don't." He said. While Lance has been able to hack the majority of the cameras in the building, one part of the building was devoid of it: The Prison Block.

The building used for the meeting was an old UNSC prison complex, but while it normally had cameras downstairs, they were being blocked, jammed or likely destroyed since he can only get static. He only took this picture when their faces were at their clearest for him.

"You are going to tell me where you are holding these 2 children in this picture." He said, holding a holo-pic for her to see it.

Sofia's facial features scrunched up in confusion. "What are- I wasn't informed that we had such prisoners." Truthfully, Lance believed her. While she was recruited by ONI for her skills in leading, she had a strong moral compass, one that was not broken thoroughly by ONI's training regimen, an ONI program specifically made to break a person to become something even less than human, yet something more efficient than your standard Spartan IV. Lance found that her file was squeaky clean; it was just that she was a victim of coincidence.

"But you have the master codes? One that allows us access to almost every room in this building." Lance asked inquisitively. Sofia shook her head.

"Even if I did tell you, what's my guarantee that you won't simply

shoot me after I give it to you?" She asked, her eyes staring defiantly at her assailant's golden visor. "I know most of you must be CBMI, and most operatives have a 'shoot to kill' philosophy when it comes to ONI and their Spartans. Face it, I might as well be dead already." She spat.

Lance knew what must be done, but Innies-2 and 3 had some issues with that. "Sir—" 3 warned at him, since Lance had a tendency to gamble his life just to earn trust of people who in all likelihood, would have shot him first than talk to him.

"I believe I know what I'm doing, 3. So please, lay-off." He warned, and 3 kept his peace. He then proceeded to take his helmet off, revealing his face to Sofia.

She had to admit, he was a rather good-looking man, even for Spartan standards.

If he was Marine Corps, girls would be coming to him left and right. She thought to herself. But shook it off when he began to speak.

"I understand your situation, Hendriks. Before you ask, I got your file. You are just a victim as most people are when ONI is involved. The only reason you stayed on is because your colleagues threatened to turn you in or would leave you for dead. And also because they knew you had nowhere else to go."

Lance stepped forward and put his hand on her right shoulder. He smiled, a genuine one, which shocked Sofia. She has never heard of any Spartan smiling with genuine kindness. If she had, pigs would have started flying by now.

"I already took the liberty of clearing your name. If you don't believe me, you can check current UNSC chatter on your radio. I know you're able to hack right into our networks. If you don't believe me, I think you should give it a try now." He offered his communication unit to her. She looked at him as though he had a second head.

While his men have no say so in his affairs in negotiation, Fireteam Indian were really perplexed as to Lance's motives for doing this. They then decided to look for any incoming hostiles. To their surprise, while the siren for fire was still blaring, he noticed that the Insurrectionists were busy containing the fires, and still unsure where the attack was coming from.

Innie-1 decided to take initiative. "Overlord, permission to advance to primary?" He asked.

Overlord, knowing that his talk may take a while and time was against him, gave the affirmative, and his team advanced, taking advantage of the confusion. "I'll send you the codes as soon as I'm done here. I'll go for the hostages." Overlord said.

Sofia used her equipment and interfaced with Lance's comms. After a tense 30 seconds, she gasped. Her file was there, along with a full amnesty of her actions, or so it says on that letter.

Sensing her disbelief and shock, Overlord took the initiative. "I understand your confusion, Ms Hendrik, but I'm no puppet. I'm a

Spartan, and that means I'll do anything to get the job done, and so far, this one will save me a bullet and hopefully a life. You don't have to understand, not yet. Just trust me, or has ONI beaten that out of your system yet?" Lance asked her.

Sofia still did not trust him, but gratitude should be repaid. "The Code is Metal-India-Zeta- 0873645."

Lance said "Thank you." Before his helmet retracted itself, covering his face once more.

Sofia closed her eyes, expecting a double-cross. But instead, her feet felt less, strained and she could move them again, albeit with some difficulty. She opened her eyes and saw the Spartan Commander lift the beam pinning her to the ground, and helping her up to her feet. What got her even more shocked and surprised: He gave her a loaded Magnum and left him with nothing. Overlord's gun was still in the vents where he took ONI sniper with surprise, leaving him virtually unarmed.

She shook her head, her beautiful features all pointing to confusion. "I still don't know why you're doing this, but I thank you for this chance. Not many Spartans would do the same for me. I know I wouldn't." She claimed.

"Not true. We all have the inherent ability to do good. It's just that in our line of work, we don't have the chance to express it more often. And I know a victim when I see one, whether you acknowledge it or not. You have to decide what to do from here, Sofia. You are the smart one here."

Sofia opened her mouth to speak, but Overlord cut her off. "Don't thank me yet. You're still here, aren't you?" And with that, he cloaked.

Sofia was, for the first time, at loss at what she should do next.

While he was no doubt the enemy, she was given more than her allies or friends would in their entire lives.

Her fate was in her hands now.

{Present day, Glinn's Field}

"I would not know what had become of her for 3 days. I was busy in between." Lance said, to a now enraptured crowd of Jedi, Clones and even some doctors present. Only Glenda Schofield knew the full story. Obi Wan was curious, since he himself was a master negotiator himself. "I was rather surprised, Commander. Not many soldiers would do what you would do."

Lance simply shrugged. "I just see the good, and bad, in people and act in accordance. Contrary to popular belief, Spartans are not "trigger-happy"."

Padme, who was silently watching up until now, asked "What happened next?"

Lance's expression went dark. "I fell into a trap, even though I had

contingencies, they still had me when they were about to kill those kids. I surrendered. Pathetic really, but the worst part? I also got my team captured too, when I told them to go after the leadership: I basically led my men knowingly to a meat grinder."

Trips took his turn at asking. "Wait, I thought they got the message about the trap?"

The Spartan nodded. "They did, but the trap was different. You see, the C12 did more than simply help me kill those ONI Spartans, it also got almost every last one of Russo's inner circle, with Russo himself ripped in half by a thin sheet of metal that came at him. You see, the room they were in was very close to the blast radius, and the occupants could not have survived such impact and debris coming at them."

Lance paused for a moment to take a breath, and continued on "But, it didn't get all of them. One man survived that debacle. And it was Michael, Malika and Myka's father, and now head of the entire Insurrectionist movement within Sentosa." Looks of surprise were plastered on everyone present in the room, except Dr. Schofield.

"Out of blind luck, apparently. He went out to get coffee when the room he was in shielded him from the worst of the blast. Didn't say he did not get out unscathed. He got cut up bad when some of the glass grazed the bastard. I wished it did more than that."

"You see, he was the one who ordered his own daughters arrested. Alongside us. He had some portable EMP on him; took down my systems faster than you can say, "Oops". I fell and the last thing I saw before going black was an Innies holding a tranquilizer gun of some sort and I felt a stinging sensation shortly before going to the lala land." Lance said with his tone between sarcastic and frustrated.

"When I woke up, that smug bastard was with me, telling all sorts of horse shit that I didn't care. The one thing he did say was that he was going to torture me. What I did not know then, was how." Lance paused, seemingly having difficulty bringing the words up to the surface.

To his credit, he kept his face neutral.

"I got my answer: in the form of 2 girls screaming for their father to stop." Many had wide eyes or gasps at that sentence.

"He was torturing me, but not with physical torture, no. He did much worse: He had his own girls tortured, as he had finally figured out who sold out Innies secrets to us. Just because he was their father, does not mean he was merciful in his punishments, in fact, I think he enjoyed it when he saw us Spartans squirm. He made us watch, as he let his men do things to those two children. My men were distraught and had hate in their eyes, but I was weak. I screamed for him to stop after a few days, but even after breaking, he still would not."

Lance then gave a full detailed explanation of the grotesque tortures done on the children. Needless to say, everyone did not enjoy hearing them.

Even though Spartans were the UNSC's best, the horrors Lance described would make even the most hardened of men break down to tears at such display of viciousness.

Many Jedi actually felt a small simmer of rage underneath their exterior facades. A few Padawans, Clones and even some masters had visible looks of rage. They have seen atrocities during their time in the Clone Wars, but what Lance was describing was simple barbaric evil that took child abuse to a terrible new level.

There were a few Jedi with neutral expressions, to their credit, as the rest literally had a painted face of hate on everyone in the room, including the Clones and some of the doctors had a few disgusted expressions amongst the group.

Some of the observers, like Daniel and Riyo, were affected as the latter was in tears with the former holding his fiancée with a burning desire to kill those responsible; Etain clutching to her husband like a lifeline, also with tears in her eyes; even the Padawans held each other, with some grimly looking on, as even their youngest members have heard or seen worse. Even the doctors had some tears as well when they heard a story as heart breaking and horrible as that.

Finally, Mak Lotor, current significant other to Padawan Zabrak Kass Tod, spoke up.

"What happened next?" He asked, his voice slightly silent, yet audible enough to be heard.

"A public execution, but he said it would be just us that dies, and in my state, I actually thought he meant us. But he told us a half-truth."

{New Sundersfield, Sentosa, June 5, 2500}

Lance remembered.

Before he went dark, he promised those girls that they would be alright, even though they too suffered, more so than the Spartans.

Before everything came to hell, he apologized to his men, who simply nodded, and stood strong for the coming storm.

Now it all came down to this.

Right before all of this went down though, he had a surprise visit from Sofia Hendriks, now the only surviving rogue Spartan IV, and was visiting Lance and proceeded to beat him senselessly for him killing her comrades, or at least, that was what the cameras saw.

However, it turned out to be all but a performance, as while her physical hits were painful, if a Spartan was close by, they would have noticed Sofia's muscles contracting right before she makes contact with Lance's face.

In other words, she was holding back.

Although all forms of communications, even neural lace, was blocked, Sofia fixed that when she through that first punch, which actually held a small scrambler, that allows the neural laces to come online for about two minutes. In it, they conversed about how Sofia stayed, only to help the Spartans by keeping her superiors in the dark. She was apparently the only remaining Spartan IV available since Lance killed her three team mates plus the sabotage to the armors of those other Spartans who were off duty self-destructed when all of them where out-fitting themselves. They found the explosives Lance planted in the artillery, but Sofia managed to keep the viruses and control programs out of sight from the engineers, long enough for her to relinquish her temporary control over them to Lance. She was able to hack into those programs and allowed her control, a feat Lance considered impressive due to the hard encryptions embedded in the programs. She even brought the virus to numerous other systems such as the air defenses, which made ODSST drops dangerous as their payload is often fast and heat-seeking, and would not activate unless Lance wanted them to.

The bad news for that however, is that most of the engineers did a purge just in case, and took a painstaking amount of time to put it back into place. The reboot itself would not have been an issue if it wasn't the fact that the engineers installed new firewalls and safeguards, the advanced kind, into the systems. The virus will work, but it would take at least 1 hour before they took hold of the systems again. It could have been done in 30 due to the fast and adaptive programming inside, but that would risk exposure as the code could leak into programs that could go haywire, so Sofia took it safe.

Lance eventually asked her if she contacted his superiors yet. Sofia responded that she did, however, the Innies managed to set-up extra defenses after the attack on the base and so evac had to be done outside the city, since they realized the mission to dismantle the leadership had failed. Although she could have backed out at anytime, she realized a debt had to be paid, at least for her, to the man responsible.

_I give the CBMI credit for being less cut and throat in their dealings than their predecessors _Lance thought. Despite their nature, CBMI had good men and women who, while the sneakiest bunch in the military, had never viewed their operatives as mere expendable assets. When a promise is made, CBMI won't leave the person out to dry.

With the lack of rogue Spartan IV's, Sofia's importance and influence grew tenfold, but her loyalties belonged now to Lance, and in extension the UNSC, increasing her value to the CBMI. She was then informed that Fireteams Demon and Gargoyle would be launched into the city itself as soon as orbital defenses that the Innies set-up would be knocked out. While the base that the Innies took over had some rather uninteresting gadgets, they did have a rather robust ground to air defenses that would make life hell for any ODSST dropping into the city.

After that, he was taken back to the cells, where most of his teammates fared slightly better, in terms of how beat up they looked like. But the worst he saw was the children.

Even though they aided and abetted an enemy, they should not have

been subjected to such tortures. To spare the details, it was ugly. The wounds and tell tale signs of sexual abuse were evident, even if they were in an adjacent cell nearby. Even after they screamed and begged their hearts out, the Innies kept on doing this horrific practice, just to torture the Spartans, even after they caved in, although Innies-3 caved in last. The father personally oversaw such evil committed, and even after that was done, he took satisfaction, to the point of laughter to hear his daughter treated in such a horrific manner.

It only served to remind the Spartans that their humanity was still there, in all of its flawed and frail glory.

It was only 10 minutes before they were all dragged to the outside. Within that timeframe, Lance said his apologies to his comrades and to the girls for putting them in this predicament. His men accepted it, saying it came with the job, and the girls surprisingly after all that time, still loved Lance. Malika's words however, stayed with him for the rest of his life. Lance's own tears came running down unable to look at her.

"Lance, don't cry. It will be alright." It sounded rather reversed. Lance looked up to her face and her sister's. Despite the days and weeks torturing both girls, they still looked innocent. Still pure, despite the abuse, as if they accepted their ends with pride. Myka herself smiled morosely at Lance.

Lance would have told them it was not the end when guards hauled them up. By that time 15 minutes have passed.

{Central area, New Sundersfield, 30 minutes later}

The light was blinding, and when everyone adjusted to the blinding glare of Sentosa's sun, he finally saw the city, and they were being paraded in their skin suits and the girls in their underwear while they were bound by the warthogs that led the procession. The warthogs started up and moved rather quickly. The Spartans could have kept up, but they had to support the children as well, as they were not as quick and durable as their friends.

They passed large and crowded streets, and they started shouting, screaming insults and throwing rocks and food stuffs to the prisoners below. Lance was shocked. The Insurrectionists literally caused more problems than their UNSC predecessors, yet he saw undying fervor and zeal he would see in fanatics. He saw their hatred and even worse, their children took part in the throwing. Most screamed "Death to the Traitors! Death to the UNSC!" and Lance wondered how did they manage to rally these citizens, despite all of the efforts of his UNSC backed rebels and his group.

His answer came in the piles of bodies he passed by, and recognized them as the people he talked to and aided him in his long operation. He bowed his head for the fallen and their families, barely keeping his feelings in check, forcing himself more than once to keep a neutral face, to not allow them to see that they were getting to him.

So far, it was barely working.

What did get to Lance was the sheer cruelty shown to both his men and

the girls, although mostly the latter that distressed the Spartan to a degree. Normally, Spartans have been seen by most soldiers as professional, cool, and above all else, at least to the ODSTs, detached to the situation, no matter how dire or desperate it was. However, the true cost of his attachment to the girls had now broken that stoic picture, and tried to shield them from the rocks, the sharp objects and the occasional vegetable/rotten fruit, but the guards pulled him away, laughing at his attempts.

The monster who called himself a father, Michael, was actually grinning seeing his children in pain, even his eyes held anger more potent than a Plasma sword, as he had taken pleasure in punishing his children's disobedience in insubordination. Sofia was in an adjacent seat in the warthog they were in, and her body language screamed hidden anger at the current predicament. He could see the occasional twitch in her hands and her head, but she mostly kept stoic and rigid.

Once again, she could win an Oscar at this rate.

The whole horrible procession took around 40 minutes. It was agonizing, but Lance felt anger more than pain. The city, whether they were doing this out of fear or their hatred for the UNSC, took turns using their group as a punching bag, and worse, it was being televised.

He hoped he would not do this, but at this rate, he could alter the coordinates to strike the city instead of the military base. This cruelty could not be tolerated any more.

He did notice there were a lot of armed Insurrectionists here. Now that he put some thought into it, when they were first brought out of the camp after weeks of imprisonment, there was a significant decrease in personnel. Lance thought it strange but he had a nagging suspicion.

They may try to move on the UNSC soon, and if Lance calculated the odds, and usually did, they could make their move within the day.

Maybe right after their execution.

Before he was dragged out, Michael said that he and his men would die, and would spare his children, regardless of their actions. Lance would at least have the comfort that they would be spared.

God, could he be so ever wrong.

{Benson Square, 5 minutes before activation.}

The Benson square was a large recreational area with a statue of a UNSC Marine carrying a young child as the center piece, which was now torn down and defaced with graffiti. It was now replaced with an elevated platform to serve as a stage/execution block. The Prisoners began to kneel on the stage, with Michael formally saying stuff like condolences to the men and women lost to the UNSC, remembering their lost leader, Nick Russo, and promising vengeance.

He then mentioned that as soon as everything here was concluded, they would begin to march on towards the UNSC and pushing them off-world,

pushing the UNSC for independence. Cheers rang throughout the crowd.

2 minutes left. Lance was hoping this madman would blab more, but what came next would make him wish the virus would have worked faster. His neural link had a vocal countdown to activation. Hopefully, it would activate soon.

Lance was expecting to for him to keep on ranting, but then he did something unexpected, and called up his children. He hoped that they would not be harmed.

The crowd seemed to be unfazed at the children's appearance, and seemed to insult them with taunts and yells. Yet, they were brave enough not to flinch. Lance was worried now.

"Now, before we go on, I'd like to show you all something you will never forget."

He then turned to his children and gave his best friendly face, even though his children gave him no less than their most scathing glare.

"Now, children, I know we had some, misunderstandings, but believe me when I say this: I forgive you and I want us to be back together."

Malika had her glare on, but her eyes betrayed the fear she felt for the man she used to called father. Myka took it upon herself to speak for both of them.

"I don't know what sick mind you must have for you to think we could come back to you, but I have a friend who treated us better than you ever will you drunk, power-hungry has been!." His reply was a backslap to the face and she crumpled as her supposed father now had contorted his face to one of sheer anger.

"You ungrateful, little bitch! You should count your blessing considering that I was the one who spared you from worse tortures when I was-"he was interrupted by the younger daughter.

"Spared us?! At least there, you made it official with the beatings you gave us before! All the abuse at home made " She spat. Lance gave her credit, her abuse and that of her sister's at the hands of her father has made her less naïve and more observant, especially at the hypocrisy of her father's statement. She was brave in the face of evil. She was also smart, so even her age betrayed her intelligence.

Michael did not take it so well and walked rather calmly to the young girl.

"Now listen here, you stupid brat." He spat while outright punching her to the ground. Lance struggled against his bonds but the guards simply bashed his head with their gun butts and he crumpled before he could even move one more step. "I am your father, you ungrateful young brat. I was the one who provided for our family, and I was the one who stayed with your mother, even as she took her last breath!" He said it with contempt dripping from his tone.

"Yeah, I wanted my father, not some crazy, drunk fanatic who believes everyone in the UNSC is bad. Yes the men in charge were evil, but not everyone was-" A kick to her midsection knocked the wind out of her, while Lance struggled with futility. He actually snarled his saliva flying right into her face. "Don't you dare

_1 minute to activation, _The neural link announced.

Lance was torn between keeping his silence and using it to delay for the virus to do what it was programmed to do or to speak out and risk everything to stop the barbarity of what was done to the children.

Of course, he picked the latter.

"STOP THIS!" He bellowed, trying to get his attention. The guard moved to hit him again but Innies-2 tripped the guard and fell off the stage, landing on his head and with a sickening crunch, killing the guard.

Even unarmed, Spartans could still do harm.

That guard however, had friends who came up and proceeded to beat the living hell out of the Spartans, while Michael doing the same to the children. All of it still being cheered on by the crowd.

Something in Lance was disgusted and angry at all of this, despite the beating he was receiving. This crowd, whether doing what they did out of fear of the Insurrectionists or hatred of the UNSC, was cheering them on, cheering Michael to beat his children up, for the guards to beat his men up, for their deaths, and worst of all, they just kept on cheering. His anger built up, and it wanted release.

45 seconds. Not soon enough.

"Enough!" Michael yelled, bringing all commotion to a halt. His children was now beaten up like before, but they had cuts, bruises and broken ribs. Myka coughed up blood, as Malika was bleeding from the nose.

"You!" He pointed at the Spartan leader, bleeding out and having his right eye swollen. "You turned my children on me, you bastard!"

Lance said nothing.

Michael then took a stun baton from one guard and stuck it into Lance until he was frothing at the mouth. Malika and Myka still had enough strength to yell at the father, pleading for him to stop.

If he was angry now, Michael is now livid. "YOU SEE?! EVEN MY OWN CHILDREN TAKE YOUR SIDE OVER MINE!" He roared, hitting Lance again this time with the butt of his sidearm.

"Because at least I was a better friend than you made a father. You were drunk, couldn't see the bottom of a glass, let alone see your own children. At least their mother was a better parent than you asshole!" Lance hissed, earning a kick that sent him backwards. Michael did not take it kindly when people mention his wife.

"Don't you dare talk about my wife, you UNSC scum bag! She was a jewel, compared to my flawed sapphire and ruby. And you, like a thief at night, stole both of them from under my nose. I don't know if you believe in God, but I am about to show you that he is on my side, you prick!" He snarled before going back to his children.

Lance scoffed. "So you're now starting to bring God into this? You must be grasping at straws here, stupid." But Michael only smiled, as if he was in a card game and had been giving his best bluff to the opponent. Lance knew that this guy was not just your average fanatic, he was the megalomaniacal kind, the unpredictable one.

That was one factor he was not able to calculate together with his plan.

"But did you know that once I'm done with you and your fascist friends that I intend to use all your little toys in the base and level those UNSC assholes and all those who associate with them." Michael said.

Now, in under normal circumstances, that would cause some concern for the Spartan, as he realizes that UNSC personnel and the civilians under their command could be killed, but Lance has an ace in this game that Michael had not seen yet.

Sofia's help ensured that the trap would be sprung when he goes hook line and sinker. But what happened next was out of his control.

Michael, with his M6 Magnum in one hand and a stun baton in the other, walked in a slow manner towards his children, the way a predator silently stalks his prey before pouncing.

Lance realized what was happening. "No! Stop! Shoot us, but leave the children out of this!" He yelled. It was against everything he was trained to do as a Spartan, but whatever compassion he learned before that simply gave in. Maybe it was the torture, or maybe Lance really had gone too close to the kids, but for whatever reason, it was now going to cost Lance. Michael stopped.

He turned to Lance, and his rage was still burning hotter than Napalm, but then it contorted to something akin to glee. And he laughed, as if he found a good joke and was having such a good time. Everyone stopped, and even the Innies looked at their leader and stepped back. "It's funny, isn't it? I am their father, but they hate me, but you are everything I hate, yet they claim you are their father. And about that stupid deal, just what makes you think I would honor something when you are even less than a bug." He said in an arrogant manner that made Lance's blood boil, yet his mind goes into a state of panic.

_20 seconds. _His neural lace informed him. _Not soon enough_.

Lance tried to make all sorts of ruckus, in the hope to stop Michael and divert his attention to him. It did not work. He slowly went by and grabbed Myka's hair, and yanked on it hard. Myka screamed but managed to kick his father in the balls. Brave, but futile.

15 seconds.

Myka was still screaming and cursing her father. But that came to an end when Michael, the supposedly loving father of Myka and Malika, and wedded to a kind woman named Maria, gunned her daughter down, first in the throat and her cries became gurgles, then in the chest which knocks her down, and finally, one in the head. Malika screamed for her sister, but the madman actually used this to rally the people to his side.

If Lance wasn't angry then, he certainly was angry now. And if he was angry then, he was most certainly livid now. The look of grief and sadness in Malika's eyes looked into his, and he was trying to say something, but it was lost to the roars of the crowd.

And the worst part of it all, he wasn't done yet.

10 seconds.

He then turned to Lance and sneered. He then turned to Malika and in a malicious manner, grabbed her and pulled her to her feet. And Lance was now both angry at this monster and, as hard as it was to admit then, afraid for Malika's well being. The adrenaline of all this going on had kicked Lance's mind into overdrive and suddenly found the whole world slow to a crawl.

The phenomenon of this type of reaction from the body only happens in Spartans due to the augmentations that increase most physical activity that normally could not happen in any normal human.

Unofficially, most Spartans usually call this phenomenon "Spartan Time" and the effects always led a Spartan to victory in the field. It was the famed Master Chief who was usually associated with that phenomenon as rumors of of Spartan 117's Spartan time was "bitch slapping" a rocket out of mid-air.

However, this time it just seemed to slow down the agony of Malika's horror and increased the time Lance had to see her die. Michael then started to say something to Malika, but it was blurred out by the effect of "Spartan Time". Never in Lance's life did he feel so powerless, and for the first time, he cursed this effect for what was about to happen.

5 seconds.

He pulled out the gun. Lance opens his mouth to protest but he was hit by a guard holding a MA5B Assault rifle.

4 seconds.

He saw the gun slowly raised to the young child's head. Lance finally makes out some words being said from his lip movements. The hit from the Assault rifle blew his eardrum to oblivion, albeit temporarily. The new leader of the Insurrection begins to spout rhetoric about how the UNSC corrupts all, even his children were untouched.

3 seconds.

He was still spouting crap, but now he looked like he was about to really shoot his own kid. Lance put all his strength into the cuffs

and promptly broke them. He saw the same guard about to hit him. Truth be told, he looked like he was enjoying this, but Lance ended that when he broke the cuffs and used its mangled remains to rip the man's throat. His men looked on and were about to stand but the guard near them shot the nearest one, Innies-3, in the leg which sent him down again.

2 seconds.

Malika saw what was happening first before her "daddy" and kicked him very hard in the shin. It was actually hard enough to send him to his knee and clutch hard. Lance saw her running to him and he began to run to her, with his arms outstretched to grab her. Michael recovered enough to see her daughter and he raised the gun at her.

But Lance saw him first and dived towards Malika.

1 second remaining. Standby for virus distribution.

He was able to reach Malika and both of them ended up in the far part of the stage. He brought Malika up and was relieved she was safe.

But the gunshot that rang out later put an end to that.

Virus dispersion now in progress. Taking all sub-routines, rerouting primary directives, assuming control of all weapons platforms. Conversion complete, all systems are now slaved to your directions, running in standby mode.

Lance did not hear that as the gunshot was louder than what it said. He held Malika at arm's length and saw a bright crimson stain starting to spread over her dress. Malika was now in shock and saw her red stain on her dress, but she also saw where the bullet hit Lance, right in the gut. But he was still in shock to notice.

Malika began to buckle, and Lance caught her. Michael was about to shoot again but Sofia finally broke her cover and shot him in the arm, along with 5 other guards with a DMR. Lance's team also broke out, with Innies-3 taking his frustrations on the guard that shot him in the foot. Michael was getting away and the crowd was helping him get through as the crowd now was trying to get on stage and kill the Spartans.

Sofia ran to Lance's side and tried to do everything she could, but it was a through and through shot.

Lance actually began to sob as he held her hand. "It's going to be o-okay." For the first time, Sofia heard something break in Lance's voice, and she knew a lot of Spartans who never broke their composure or their cool, even if civilians died.

Malika knew better. She shook her head, but smiled at Lance. "Not your fault." She smiled as Lance cried.

"No, no, I'm so sorry. I couldn't protect your sister and you. I'm sorry I ever asked you to do all those things for me. I'm so sorry for meeting with you in the first place. You would have been safe. You would-" Lance sobbed but was interrupted when Malika brought her blood-stained hand to his lips.

She shook her head, and coughed out some blood. Malika croaked out her last words "Not your fault! Never regretted a t-thing! I-I lo-love you, and m-my sis would say the sa-ame!" She then breathe her last.

Lance face was now in full anguish, and broke down there and then, uncaring to everything around him. He reached over to Myka and soon he held both girls as he cried. When the team and Sofia looked at Lance, they paused for a while before the bullets started flying again.

While Lance was dealing with the grief, his team gave him cover and began to shoot at literally everyone since everyone in the crowd seemed to be either shooting at him or, if not with a gun, started grabbing the sharpest object they could find and began to throw or charge at the Spartans. While they were able to stave the immediate threat, they knew it was a matter of time before they could be overrun by the crowd. And between them and freedom, they did not want to increase civilians, despite their hostilities towards the Spartans.

Sofia had to shake Lance out of it. For a few minutes, he was solely focused on the two girls in his hands, and saw their pendants: Myka's was sparrow shaped with a bow in its beak, while Malika's was a hummingbird with an arrow in its beak. He was fixated on those since he gave it to them during their 2nd week in Sentosa. He bonded with those girls, and now it cost him, and them, everything.

Finally, Sofia's frantic voice came through to his head. "GET UP! COME ON! WE CAN'T HOLD THEM FOREVER!" She yelled before unloading her Battle Rifle on 3 Insurrectionists. "I'm out!" Sofia said to her colleagues. So far, they only targeted the most hostile but avoided indiscriminate fire in to the crowd.

"One mag left." Innies-1 replied, as he reloaded his assault rifle.

"One in the chamber." Innies-2 said, with one shell left in his shotgun before discharging it on 2 nearby Insurrectionists. "And now I'm out!" He said.

"Still have some ammo left, but that's all I got!" Innies-3 said, as he picked a SAW and M9 Submachine gun and threw it to Innies-2, and then proceeded to get his own Sniper Rifle and began picking off any long-range threats.

Assimilation complete. WARNING! Enemy artillery platforms are now targeting UNSC assets. Recommend immediate action.

For the longest time, Lance held the two girls before he slowly set them down, and grabbed both of their necklaces and tied them around his fist. His face was now one of cold fury. He suddenly began to activate his Neural Lace. He began to change the trajectory of the long-range missiles, the ones loaded with phosphorous.

All Artillery platforms selected. Targets verified. WARNING! You are in proximity of projectile range. Verify coordinates.

Verify. Activate on my word only.

Lance closed his Neural Lace and began to charge right at the enemies. First he grabbed the closest Insurrectionist with body armor and began to use him as a shield against incoming fire, and grabbed his gun and, in quick and precise bursts, killed the closest threats and, in an act that would forever be remembered by Sofia and Lance, pulled the pins on the grenades strapped to the soldier and kicked him hard enough to be pushed right into the crowd.

His men saw it and they ducked. After that, the grenades blew up. Those that saw the grenades tried to run, but the crowd, for the most part, was focused on getting to the Spartans. The results were nothing short of pure horror as a thick red mist suddenly enveloped the area, with body parts and bodies flying. The explosives on the Insurrectionist were enough to send the crowd running away from the general area, with only the more experienced militia men and regular Insurrectionist soldiers stayed, but were disorientated by the crowd as they blocked their line of fire.

Lance's anger was burning, and he wanted nothing more than to wipe everything in this city down to the foundations, but he knew he needed an edge. First he would need his armor. He tempered his anger into something colder, but no less potent in the destruction caused by Lance.

Using the panic he'd caused, he signaled his men to rejoin him and they were off, with Sofia leading them to a supply depot where extra supplies and even some spare GEN 2 armors were located. The Depot itself was located 2 miles from the square itself. Although there were fears of Michael discovering it, Sofia uncovered that her former colleagues set their locations secret, in the event of a double-cross.

Innie-1 spoke to Lance first when they got to the depot. "Are you mad? Why did you throw that grenade? Do you know how many Geneva Convention rules we just broke with that?"

Innie-2 however tried to defend Lance. "Come on, we were surrounded by lots of bad guys, and they were all hostile. The only reason we didn't do it ourselves is because we were being pinned. Admit it, Mark," Innie-2 finally dropped the code names. "We are outgunned here and any chance these bastards get is one bullet to the head for us."

Innie-1, whose real name was Mark, began to argue. Innie-3 however began to intervene. "Alright, Chris, that's enough." He turned to Innie-2, Chris, who was looked calmer, while Mark was still frustrated. "Come on, Malcolm. We have codes to live by, and we just proved to these bastards that we are the monsters Russo advertised to the planet."

"And so what? We allow these bastards to kill us like sheep? Even you can't be that dumb." Chris retorted.

"But-" he was interrupted.

Lance decided to intervene before Sofia did so. "Enough, what's done is done. Chris is right, this entire city has become hostile, and so I have no choice but to blow this city straight to hell. Plus, they have enough men to launch an offensive on the UNSC, even if it is

futile, they can make it a pyrrhic victory if they can throw enough men at them."

"But what about the artillery? Won't that even the odds for the Innies? Not to mention the fact that they can decimate the UNSC lines." Malcolm asked as he was getting outfitted.

"Leave that to me. In fact, we'll stay here for about 10 minutes." Lance replied.

Mark, getting Lance's meaning when he said that, started to renew the argument. "Sir, I must protest! You have to keep a level head about the situation." Mark looked down when Lance's face faltered a bit in the expression. "I'm sorry about those two girls, Lance. I truly am. But we can't let their deaths blind you to rational thought! We need a better plan, one that does not involve massive casualties on both sides." Mark said. But just as he did, Sofia was watching the cameras and saw something that made her blood boil.

"Lance, you need to see this." She said, her lips pushed together and her fists clenched. Lance did and what he saw made him scream in agony.

The two girls left behind, Malika and Myka, were being desecrated and hacked into pieces, with Myka getting the most abuse, while Malika was being viciously hacked like a butcher slaughtering a pig. Lance's anguish increased tenfold, and clawed at the screen as if he could reach out and strangle those responsible.

His men rushed to his side and saw the screen. They felt sick inside, even Mark, who was having trouble keeping a lid on his emotions, whereas his two other comrades were really fuming now.

Lance then saw Michael grabbing Myka's and Malika's heads and raising them up for all to see. He then proclaimed this.

"WITH THIS, I AM CLEANSED FROM THE DISGRACE OF MY CHILDREN!"

Lance was now livid, his anger now threatening to boil over into something much angrier than a Jiralhanae Chieftain who just lost his helmet. But all of a sudden, he cooled down. He became calmer, but much more alert. His focus, once divergent, now converged into one single purpose:

Killing everyone responsible for their deaths, and Michael was going to be on his top of his kill list.

Mark realized that whatever hope he had of convincing his leader to do the right thing was now impossible. Still, he had to try.

"Sir, I know that this looks bad, bu-" He was cut off when Lance punched Mark with sufficient force to dent the wall behind Mark, rendering him unconscious.

Malcolm and Chris went to him and checked his vitals, to see if Lance did any internal damage. Shocked as they were, they were not surprised that Lance lashed out like that. They worried if he would really take it all out on the Insurrectionists. Sofia slowly went over to Lance.

She placed her gauntleted hand on his shoulder. "Lance, I think that taking out your allies is not the best course action, so calm down. Please. We need you to think."

Lance breathed in and sighed loudly. "I'm sorry, Sofia."

Sofia smiled slightly. "Not your fault. But Mark's right. You need to think this through." She hoped her words would come through to him. Chris also decided to take a stand as well.

"She's right, boss. Mark maybe a stuck-up, by-the books type of guy, but doing anything rash right now may screw us over. Besides, how on Earth are you gonna kill everyone in New Sundersfield anyway?" He said, hoping to appeal to common sense.

Lance, however, smiled. Chris was slightly confused but Sofia got the glint in his eyes. She was about to argue about the use of those missiles, but then she saw that her Neural Lace was still in the systems inside the artillery base. "Oh no."

Lance suddenly snapped to attention from Chris. "What is it?"

"They're launching now, but they're targets are not at the UNSC lines, they're aiming at the areas behind them." She said in horror.

Malcolm realized how dire this was. "That's where the refugees are camped!"

Lance sprung up and went into the chamber where the machine that outfitted ONI Spartans with their GEN 2 Armors was located and began to suit up rapidly. After a few minutes, Lance's Neural Lace was now enhanced with the Armor's communications systems inside the helmet. The Reactive Metal Liquid Crystal Layer now enhancing his movements, as he rushed to the nearby console.

"How long until launch?" Lance asked. Sofia answered "60 seconds. There's barely enough time to shut them off!" That was before she saw some high level codes being inputted into the systems. Sofia realized that Michael had just placed his override commands into the system, to rush the weapons into firing earlier than expected.

The missiles launched first, before the artillery platforms would deliver their payload. Sofia warned Lance about the launch.

"I've noticed. I'm trying to get the virus to retarget the military base, but for some reason, it refuses to redirect itself." Lance said as his frustration became evident in the furious tapping of his gauntlet.

Sofia typed in the console a few time before coming to a conclusion. "They've somehow cloaked their locations. The firewalls are extremely tough and I simply don't have the equipment needed to crack them." She said.

Lance closed his eyes. "So be it." He said to himself. Using his Neural Lace, he began to recite the activation codes.

_Activation code:Alpha-Sierra-India-6574-23 Whiskey 54.

Verify?_

Acknowledged, Sodom shall burn with hellfire. Angels are in vicinity of blast radius. Recommend shelter in any underground location. The Neutral voice of his neural lace echoed in his skull.

"Sodom" is a code name for New Sundersfield, to which Lance called it when he marked the city 2 weeks ago, with "Angels" as the Spartans are identified by the program.

"Then we take shelter soon." Lance said it aloud for his men to hear him. Sofia was about to protest but the finality in Lance's tone was clear. There was nothing to be done.

Sofia despondently replied. "Yes sir. There's a basement here that we can use to take cover in."

Lance looked to his men. "See to it that Mark gets downstairs." His men nodded, though their discomfort to the whole situation was apparent in their body language.

Soon they were heading downstairs with all the weapons and guns they could carry. The plan was that they would hold downstairs until reinforcements would arrive. But Lance had other plans. He silently accessed the depot's systems and rewrote the whole system with the same virus that Lance had implanted into the rockets. He was able to use his Neural Lace to allow the virus to access the depot.

As soon as they entered inside, Lance kicked Sofia and then bolted out the doors, where he overriden the security locks before he ripped them apart. He heard banging on the doors, but Lance made sure that until his task was complete, his men would stay there. His men and Sofia were trying to talk him out of it, trying to get him to steer past the hate.

But it was already too late. Lance was now emotionally compromised, he knew this. And now, he was going to go after the one person in this god-forsaken rock, and everyone else who stood between him and his vengeance.

Michael would pay. He began to comb the weapon racks and started to arm himself with an Assault Rifle with a grenade launcher attachment and a SAW, with Incendiary grenades and 2 M6 Magnums strapped to his sides. He also found a large machete and took it too, and put ammo bandoliers on his chest

{Glinn's Field, The Present}

"You didn't." Ahsoka breathed in horror. She, along with the Clones and the Jedi in the room had equal looks of terror and sadness. They all felt the grief, yet still were shocked at what Lance did, even Anakin, who did the same thing but not at the level Lance committed.

"I did, and for those who don't believe me," He pulled out a crystal chip from his back pocket. "This will probably tell you the rest of the story to you. I hope you have an empty stomach, ladies and gentlemen, because this will get brutal." He then handed it over to a doctor who began to enter the chip in a terminal and typed in some commands. The room darkened and a holo screen was shown in a

pentagon-like state to allow full 360 degree viewing.

Lance began typing on a holopad as he began to show them everything from that moment he put on the Mjolnir GEN-2.

So far, everything Lance had said was accurate, from the actions to the words said, Lance had truly said this word for word. But when Lance closed those doors and exited the depot that was when things became more gruesome. Some of the footage taken was from street cameras moments before their destruction or some still functioning after the first strike, but they did not shy away from the carnage that unfolded that day.

{New Sundersfield, 1 minute before missile impact, The Past}

Now, most people would come to the conclusion that Lance reprogrammed those missiles out of a desire for revenge, and after all that these people have done, they would have deserved it.

They would only be half-right.

The city was actually in close proximity to the base and Lance targeted the part that was closest to it, so the Northwestern area would be the least damaged after the missile strike. After Lance exited the depot, he saw the missiles in the sky and had to find appropriate shelter that was sturdy enough, not too fortified so that Lance can immediately move on the Insurrectionists. He saw an open manhole into the sewers. Unlike other people who would allow emotion to cloud judgement, anger actually cleared Lance's focus, but sacrificing empathy and compassion at the same time. Lance looked up and saw one of those missiles come up. He realized that it's trajectory was nearby his location. He was confident though, that it wouldn't breach the underground bunker in the depot.

With no hesitation, he jumped right into darkness, just as the missiles struck at the first target. As they did so, debris began to crumble from the top and fire was actually licking the upper part of the sewers. Fire began to ravage everything, and Lance began to hear the screams of everyone involved. But then a large piece of debris hit Lance in the head hard, and all was dark.

{Glinn's Field, The Present}

The video began to show again as Lance got up. He checked his suit's systems and began to slowly traverse the open ground. And what he found was something out of a hell hole. The entire city was in flames. Buildings were alight with orange lights and black smoke permeated the entire area where Lance was in.

But the worst part of it all was the screaming.

The Jedi and the Clones in the room were no strangers to the atrocities of war, but what they saw encompassed Anakin's own, in fact, it made Anakin's own slaughter of the Tusken Raiders look tame in comparison to what he saw on screen. Burning, screaming, dying but the Burning was the worst part. People were screaming, they were pleading and begging the Spartan to render aid to them.

Etain looked like she was going to faint, but Darman was still shocked that the more he saw, the he too became affected. When he

heard about the properties of WP(White Phosphorous) that was present in the payload alongside Napalm, he too was rather sickened. Incandescent particles of WP cast off by a WP weapon's initial explosion can produce extensive, deep second and third degree burns. One reason why this occurs is the tendency of the element to stick to the skin. Phosphorus burns carry a greater risk of mortality than other forms of burns due to the absorption of phosphorus into the body through the burned area, resulting in liver, heart and kidney damage, and in some cases multiple organ failure. These weapons are particularly dangerous to exposed people because white phosphorus continues to burn unless deprived of oxygen or until it is completely consumed. In some cases, burns are limited to areas of exposed skin because the smaller WP particles do not burn completely through personal clothing before being consumed.

In short, it burns, and it burns with horrific abandon, especially on the organic foe. In addition, the smoke coming from it can also kill if exposed to a long period of time. So if the fire does not kill them, the smoke will.

Darman actually feels grateful they are not the enemies of the Terrans. Otherwise, lots of Clones would have been killed, given the nature of how Terrans fight, especially how this Spartan fights.

Kal Skirata had been in the observer stands, so he too could see the footage. As a Mandalorian, he could respect Lance's fighting prowess and tactical ability to assess a situation and act accordingly. However, as a Human being, even his own experiences as a bounty hunter could not prepare him from the amount of cruelty done unto the enemies that came across Lance's path.

As Lance went to the base, he saw the consequences of his actions bear fruit as the people of the city: Men, women, and even children were all set aflame, still alive, screaming, trying to desperately claw their way into Lance's armor. The Jedi saw through his camera the hate in their eyes, as those not affected tried to take potshots as the crowd distracted or attacked Lance.

Lance was fed up with this and took out his machete and dispatched the people on the ground, as he used his magnum to pick off the snipers. The way Lance took out the enemy with ease made even Kal uneasy. There was a sense of burning anger in the way Lance savagely hacked and slashed through the burning remnants of the people who lived in New Sundersfield. Not even the children were spared.

Ahsoka was outraged. "How do you even look at yourself in the mirror when you wake up in the morning? Those girls would not have wanted that." She said with disgust, as she voiced the question most people in the room, even the doctors, were thinking.

Lance shrugged. "You may think me a monster, butchering those people. But the truth is, and it scares me to this day, I just did not care at the time, and when I did, I don't feel a thing. And I was happy and scared at the same time."

Ahsoka was infuriated. This man was a killer, all the way to the core. "And you don't think that what you did was justified?"

Lance simply held his hand up to her. "Save them for after the video." His eyes never left the screens.

Some just sat there with despair and looked at Lance bleakly, before they bowed their heads in acceptance of their impending death. Lance left those to die in their misery, but he changed his mind and began gunning them down left and right, which finally made some Jedi faint, or throw up.

Scene after scene was only more carnage and more death, all these when Lance fired upon the city. It was almost too much to bear for everyone involved, save for Lance himself and Dr. Schofield, who herself watched it earlier during her own treatment with Lance.

Soon, he finally reached the base, and immediately slaughtered all inside, whether they had a gun in their hands or not. He entered a large bunker that Lance's scanners had picked up on life signs and used the incendiary grenades and flushed down the air ventilation shafts. The result suddenly turned all ventilation shafts into small fire-breathing death traps that singed and charred most of the occupants inside.

When Lance entered after the inferno was put out by the building's water systems, he entered a misty corridor that was unable to block his helmet's ability to find life. He slowly combed the building until he heard coughing in a nearby room. He used C4 instead of C7 to breach to door.

He wanted to make the kill personal.

He saw his prey, weak and vulnerable, with his legs burnt to the bone, and he cried out for mercy.

Michael sobbed. "Please, please, don't kill me." Lance snarled, as he was disgusted at the man's own cowardice, his bravado and arrogance now reducing to whimpering and sobbing. He grabbed his collar, which elicited a scream of pain from Michael, and yet he was not done.

"I-I have rights." He stuttered. But Lance simply stared at him with enough malice to make Hitler himself look like a 3rd grader bully. He simply grabbed the sides of his head, and before he pulled the man's face apart, he gestured to the necklace charms he gave to Malika and Myka. "Recognize these?! You should have let them go." And with as much brutality and strength as possible, ripped his face in half.

At this point, 3 things happened at the same time, ¼ of the audience screamed, with 4 of them throwing up, or in the cases of Etain, Padme, and Ahsoka, fainted. Even Anakin was projectile vomiting. The doctors who were supposed to be helping the Jedi were on their knees, losing their lunches.

Lance calmly left his seat and left all the moaning Jedi and Clones behind, as some of the Observers did the exact same thing. As UNSC medics and personnel rushed inside the room, he went over to Anakin who was kneeling and helped him up. He made sure Anakin was looking in at Lance straight in the eyes, and said.

"Boy, I don't know why you beat yourself up like this, but I don't care. What I did there, I don't regret. We all do things, good and bad, but once they're done, you can never repay the sins unleashed

upon the innocent. But we can make up for those mistakes." Lance said, with Anakin looking narrowing his eyes at Lance, not backing down from him.

"And after all you've done?!" Darman shouted, after putting his wife in a more comforting position. "What kind of monster can even consider redemption after all that you've done? And how has the UNSC let someone like you get away with something so evil like that!"

Lance looked rather calm when he addressed the Clone Commando. "When the UNSC came, CBMI came up with a cover story that had we were captured and tortured, but were rescued when the missiles went haywire. The Spartan who saved us, Sofia, was the one who pulled us out after a crisis of conscience, and sheltered us when the missile that were supposed to hit the UNSC had faulty programming. She was reinstated after I, along with the rest of my team, given our word to not only give her full pardon, but to also put her back on the UNSC as a Spartan IV."

"Although, most of my men will never look at me the same way again, and I was forced to endure the taunts and insults of my fellow Spartans, nicknaming me "The Butcher of Sentosa." They thought I set the whole world on fire, when it was just one city." Lance calmly replied back to Darman.

"But I brought myself back up, after the incident. There was a major battle at a planet called Doisac. I was one of the surviving Spartans who fought tooth and nail to complete the objective, but taking the lives of my men a priority before that. I fought on that hellhole, and took plasma for men who would have, with their opinions about me not so stellar, left me to die. But I did, and I almost died, but got knocked out."

Lance walked forward to the Clone, continuing on. "When I came to, I earned the respect of my men, and was promoted to Commander. Now, if you don't believe me, that's on you. But I will earn your respect as well."

Kal then stepped forward to address that. "Respect is earned, not said. When you live up to your part of the deal, then I will respect that you are not some evil monster that pretends to be a man."

Lance nodded, and before he left the room, he addressed Darman. "Oh, and to answer what kind of monster I am, I am a human one, and I accept that as part of what I am as a person, so don't tell me that I'm don't feel, because while I don't regret what I did, I still feel sorry for what I had to do to them. What would you do, for your family, as I did for them?" He held out his necklace, a sparrow and a hummingbird, both with arrows in their beaks. He was holding up mementos of a dead past that Lance could not let go.

Nor can he bear to.

He then leaves the room, letting everyone ponder on these words, especially as Anakin looks at him, feeling as though he too shares a loss that Anakin has experienced, a kinship of sorts.

The words of Lance reverberate through his head.

"What would you do, for your family?"

****EPILOGUE****: The Matters of Forgiveness

{Glinn's Field, Southwest side, 5 hours later.}

Lance was on the balcony, looking on the holo pad for the line-up he had when Battle Group Miranda came in. He had overlooked the Saratoga Battle Group and saw some interesting things. Of course, the data was old, by about 15 hours, as Lance had to take care of other things since then.

Lost Legion ETA: 10 hours, excluding Napalm, who has been re tasked by CBMI to *****CLASSIFIED*(Details below)****

Fireteam Aqua (Hunter Branch)

Leader: Warren Jess, Callsign "Spider"

Medic/Hacker: Rameez Rashid, Callsign "Slim"

Sniper: Rebecca Fields, Callsign "Lotus"

Heavy Weapons/Demolitions: Jack Ironside, Callsign "Jackhammer"

Scout: Alison Gould, Callsign "Kiddo"

Fireteam Napalm (Warrior Branch)

Addendum: ****Fireteam Napalm has been retasked for Central Bureau of Military Intelligence purposes. Current location: Unknown. Awaiting further notice from CBMI.****

Leader: Sofia Hendriks, Callsign "Firebrand"

Medic/Hacker: Thomas McQueen, Callsign "Smooth"

Sniper: Hong Kwun Yin, Callsign "Earth Lion"

Heavy Weapons/Demolitions: Eliza Klien, Callsign "Voodoo"

Scout: Jason Wisterfield, Callsign "Gladius"

Fireteam Royal (Fortress Branch)

Leader: Gabriel Whiteman, Callsign "Angel"

Medic/Hacker: Lulu Zandakiri-Prince, Callsign "Tokyo"

Sniper: Eric Prince, Callsign "Easy"

Heavy Weapons: Zaeed Moffi, Callsign "Omen"

Scout: Sarah Clarke, Callsign "Rogue"

Fireteam Gospel (Fortress Branch)

Leader: Hannah Novak, Callsign "Nova"

Medic/Hacker: Dennis Gostibule, Callsign "Gopher"

Sniper: Fleur Natasha De Castro, Callsign "Filler"

Heavy Weapons/Demolitions: Jose Laruscain, Callsign "Titan"

Scout: Billy Leina Kidd, Callsign "Magician"

New Spartan recruits inserted in Lost Legion after arrival of UNSC Battle Group Miranda Keyes.

Spartan Mason Briggs, Callsign "Hotel"

Spartan Hal Janis, Callsign "Sucker"

Spartan Mayumi Takehawa, Callsign "Sakura"

Spartan Ferb Toronto, Callsign "Cabbage"

Spartan Horace Morgan, Callsign "Shades"

Spartan Maya Mercilly, Callsign "Siren"

Spartan Logan Dunn, Callsign "Madman"

Spartan Jackson Drills, Callsign "Gundam"

Spartan Otsuru Okiku, Callsign "Warfan"

Spartan Jervis Tuner, Callsign "Volt"

Spartan Elizabeth Ashe, Callsign "Ice Queen"

Spartan Ramon Guadalupe, Callsign "Favela"

Spartan Gian Durante, Callsign "Bok"

****NOTE:**** It is currently noted that Warfan, Ice Queen, Cabbage, and Shades have already seen field action. Recommend drafting them as team leaders for their experience in battle.

Spartan II Red Team

Alice-130

Douglas-042

Jerome-092

Lance then looked over to a hidden file, and the person who sent it had the initials S.H. on it. Lance smirked before reading below. It may have the CLASSIFIED tag on it, but Lance knew a letter when he saw one.

****CLASSIFIED:** Napalm has been assigned by General Chernof to escort Dr. Catherine Halsey, and the Spartans who were found in Darkness Falls base back to Reach. Tribunal currently discussing Dr. Halsey's fate, as she is the main researcher of the infamous Spartan II program. Currently considering her importance of her presence to Spartan II's. Not sure on the resolution, but they may allow them to

enter the Andromeda area if a Forerunner artifact is indeed located in the Andromeda, especially Halsey.**

**P.S. Try and keep out of trouble. S.H. **

Lance smiled gently. Ever since that debacle at Sentosa, he and Sofia were close friends. It would have escalated to something more, if Sofia made the first move, beaten off by Wren, who once held a rivalry for Lance a while back. Nowadays, they were just good friends, although they did try to restart their feud once.

He shook his head. _Leave it to the female populace to fight over me._

"I'm not done with you yet." A voice, wary but determined, sounded off from behind him.

Lance nodded to acknowledge his presence. "I was wondering when you would come, Skywalker. I thought you would have been with Padme after today."

Anakin simply took his place at the railings and leaned over to them. "She's asleep, and I need you to answer a few things for me."

"Such as?"

"How do you deal with it?" Anakin asked. Lance can relate to Anakin's dilemma. Even though Lance's actions were more extreme than Anakin's, it was no less horrible. Slaughtering a village full of sentient life like vermin can change the outlook of how the Jedi views him. Especially if that person is the fabled "Chosen One" who is supposed to strike down the Sith.

Expectation is always easier than reality.

Now, Lance has read into what the Jedi was able to provide for him about the prophecy, but what they were expecting was a white knight in shining armor, not some kid from a backwater planet who manages to slaughter a village out of anger. Still, if he could change the Jedi Code from forgoing emotion to embracing it, then it was still something to be proud of.

"Have you ever heard the story of Jesus Christ?" Lance asked.

"Not that I have? Isn't he the person who created Christianity, a religion that most of you Terrans embraced?" Anakin asks. He was able to get what the general gist of Terran religion when he was stopping by chapel area in the base.

"Well, you ain't wrong." Lance said when he offered a chair for Anakin to sit in, and soon, both men were sitting down, face to face.

"It was said that he was born under a shining star, and that the first visitors to his cradle were some shepards and the sheep they were herding. Then when he was a young child, he was brought to a large city and he was in the grand temple of that city, and was baptized according to the law of that city, before he was lost for 3 days, with his parents searching for the child constantly. When he was found again, they found their child in the temple, with scholars

surrounding the child, astounded as he was answering all their questions with ease."

Anakin was enraptured by the tale he was being told, though his face was stoic. "Hmm, what happened next?"

"Well, lots of things happened, but when he became an adult, he started doing things that no normal man could do, like turning water into wine, healing the sickly, proclaiming the word of God, the One Father, and spreading his teachings of love and kindness, and most importantly, forgave the sinful of all their transgressions."

"He must have been real popular, huh?" Anakin asked, impressed and amazed that such a person existed.

"He was able to resurrect the dead." Lance pointed out.

Anakin's eyes widened at that. "He did?"

Lance only nodded. "However, there were some who loathed him, simply because he was against everything they believed in and also because they thought he was a hoax. It is also worth mentioning that those men were supposed to be their religious leaders, but felt threatened by what this man represented, at least in their eyes."

"He was loathed and they kept their hatred of him in check, until they would find the perfect time to end him. They did so after they managed to get one of his followers, a man named Judas Iscariot. He betrayed him, and set him up. After a trial, he was found guilty, and was executed, painfully and unmercifully."

Anakin felt a slight surge of anger when he next spoke. "How could they do that to someone?"

Lance held his hand up to Anakin. "Now, I wasn't finished yet. Before he died, he forgave on all of those responsible for his death, and forgave all sins. He died bearing the sins of all of us, from the lowliest thief, to the most corrupt official. He did not stop forgiving them all, and still does to this day."

Anakin was silent, digesting this info with surprise. "He must have been a great man to do something as selfless as forgiving others."

"He was." Lance nodded. "In fact, 3 days after that, he was resurrected from the dead."

Anakin was silent after that, before speaking "Why are you telling me this?"

Lance paused for a while. "Because, I believe we all still have a chance for salvation, regardless of our sins. He died for that, and I believe that despite everything, we still have chance that people can come to accept us, all aspects that makes us who we are. We only need to persevere. He allowed this to happen to himself so that he can redeem everyone, even his most hated of foes. We're not like him, but we can try and follow his example."

"So you're saying that I should bide my time and let them insult me?" Anakin asked incredulously.

"Until an opportunity arises that allows redemption for you. I've earned mine long ago, but before that, I've learned to bear with the hate. Start learning to bear with it, because for now, nothing else will change their opinions about you, at least, not in words. People have their own opinions, and we are not there to force change upon it, but rather, leave an impression to change their opinions."

"You are wiser than you let on." Anakin complimented.

"What can I say? Experience goes with the wisdom. I did not say that was going to be easy, especially for people in our position, with the ability to take lives to save lives. The only difference between me and you is that I am more used to ending conflicts with a bang, whereas you Jedi end them with either diplomacy or a lightsaber." Lance smirked.

"Well, my master Obi-Wan had a knack for doing both." Anakin said.

"Ah, yes, the Negotiator. That was your master's nickname? Or was my intel out of date?" Lance asked.

Anakin nodded. "Speaking of intel, I've also heard some rumors from the Clones that came with us. Care to explain why they seem to be mobilizing when we are not at war with Palpatine?"

Lance nodded. "They are following Kal Skirata's lead and we are helping them retake Mandalore. I believe you recognize this character." He then held out a datapad with a Zabrak, male and has black and red type of color scheme on his face.

"Maul. I know him. Obi-Wan told me of this man. He was the reason Qui-Gon, Obi-Wan's Master, was killed, but was defeated and presumed killed, at least from what I've heard. But he survived, and told me of how his defeat made Maul mad and seemingly crazy. Also, he has killed many people, including a Jedi, just so that he could get to Obi-Wan." Anakin informed Lance.

"Well then," Lance then grabbed the datapad from Anakin's grasp. "He's on our top of our kill list when my men land on Mandalore." Lance said.

Anakin then shook his head. "No offense to you or your warriors, but this man is beyond you. Aside from his astounding lightsaber skills, his mastery of the Force gives him an edge over most other warriors, nevermind the fact that his state of mind is not stable at the moment."

Lance nodded in acknowledgement "I appreciate the concern, Master Jedi. But I believe we have two CBMI operatives who can say otherwise." Lance then rubbed his hand behind his neck.

"Who?" Anakin asked.

"I believe, Master Skywalker that he is referring to me and my partner." A female voice said from the doorway. Anakin turned his head, and when he recognized the pair, his eyes grew wider than plates.

Two cloaked figures stood by the doorway, but their faces were visible enough to be seen. Anakin recognized the first figure as Barriss Offee, the Jedi who was a good friend of young Ahsoka Tano. She was wearing her signature cloak, but she was wearing an armored suit that resembled the ODSIs that Anakin met earlier. And the figure on the left behind her was Asajj Ventress, with a black cloak on and wearing the same set of armor as Barriss.

Barris stepped forward and smirked. "It is good to see you once again, Master Skywalker." She smirked. "We have much to discuss."

****REVIEW, and tell me what you think? Tell in either PM or Review what I should do next?****

****One, the retaking of Mandalore arc, features the whole of Lost Legion with the rogue Clones and retaking Mandalore from the Sith. And the uncovering of an ancient artifact that connects the Andromeda to the Forerunners. This is now bringing Star Wars to Halo, instead of the other way around, OR:****

****Two, the Battle of Jabiim arc, a flashback arc that involves the Padawan Pack and their accounts when the UNSC attacks Jabiim after Nimbus Commandoes attack UNSC trade ships, mistaking them for Republic ships. In order to leave them out of the Conflict, Count Dooku cuts all ties to Jabiim, and leaves them to the UNSC. What follows after is a flashpoint between UNSC and the Republic against droids left behind by the CIS, and the Commandoes under Alto Status. Takes place 1 year and 2 months after the Battle of Geonosis. ****

****UH-60 NIGHTSTALKER has voted for the Mandalore arc, so unless there is a majority who will overrule, then my next story arc will be, by default, Mandalore .****

****Please, to whoever Guest is, please log in so that I can reply.****

****My next chapters, however, will focus on bringing Halsey to the Andromeda. ****

8. Episode 8

****AND I AM BACK!****

****Now, Unless you've heard the news! THE XBOX ONE SUCKS! WTH? 24 hour DRM?! With one hour offline play and you have to pay for it like an MMORPG? ****

****Microsoft loses gamers like this. Sony's my only hope now, with the upcoming Kingdom Hearts III!****

****Now, I am going to dedicate this chapter to my friend Andrithir, over at the Halo/Mass Effect Crossover section, who has suffered a terrible, terrible accident. His friend Sam has posted this with the latest chapter using his account:****

_It is with a heavy heart that I have to tell you this, but as one of Andrithir's best friends I feel that it is my duty to inform you what

has happened. Andrithir has been involved in a car accident on the way back home after celebrating his 18th____Birthday._

The nature surrounding Andrithir's accident is something that I find completely unjust and disturbing. He was sitting in the back seat on the left side, asleep with his head resting against the window. Another car failed to stop and ploughed into Andrithir's parent's car, at the very spot he was sitting. His parents have walked away with minor injuries, but he's in a coma and the doctors have told us to prepare for the worst.

I cannot explain the pain this has caused us as he is a major part of our lives, and that anyone who knew him would consider themselves lucky to be called his friend. His dream of becoming a writer is something that is not known to many people. Only his closest friends and those who share the same interests know about his literary escapades.

In our previous discussions, he wished that I take up the mantle of continuing on with his stories, should he be unable to. Of course I can barely hope to match his writing style. People of Andrithir's calibre are rare, and those he considers his betters are even more so. A few of our closest friends and talented writers have banded with me to continue on Andrithir's beloved hobby so that his legacy may continue. Rest assured he has left a notebook behind detailing where he has planned for this story to go.

Hope to see you again on our next adventure, old friend. Should the worst come to pass, I can only hope that I've finished your story the way you dreamed it to be, and that it honours your memory.

Sam.

Since then, I have received further update, but it isn't much:

As much as I hope he isn't on death's door, but from what the doctors are**

>**saying, Andrithir is treading a very fine line. They fear that his heart could****

>**give out at any moment after the injuries it has suffered. He's stable, albeit****

>**indefinitely. And if his heart stops, then they'll be at a lost to revive him****

>**as his left ribcage is severely damaged. I wish there was something we could do, but it's all on him now.**

**I know this all feels a bit too much, but I put that there to address the situation and hope that more people can give their support. Please pray for his quick recovery. **

Now, onto the chapter.

Episode 8: Ut redimeret eam tibiâ€|(To redeem thyselfâ€|)

{Planet Reach, Milky Way Galaxy, 1600 hours laterâ€|}

"Any Questions?" The CBMI official in charge of debriefing asked after the whole debrief was done. Admiral Lasky had stepped down for

a while to deal with some issues back at HQ, leaving the CBMI operative to do the debriefing alone.

The whole group, Spartan II Blue Team and Grey Team, Spartan IV Fireteams Crimson and Majestic, and Dr. Halsey remained silent. They had recently been doing an update on the status of the UNSC, and their current predicament in the Andromeda as they are in a stalemate with the newly-christened galactic Empire led by a power-hungry dictator who sees the UNSC as potential threats.

The good news is that the UNSC's main allies were with the CIS, and their standing forces are just as impressive as the UNSC's, if a bit skinny, due to their reliance of droids as part of their military infrastructure. Halsey found it a mistake as such machines could be hacked and can turn on their masters.

"I got one." Tedra Grant, from Fireteam Majestic, spoke up. "What happens to us, lot?"

The CBMI officer in charge answered her question. "As soon as Command clears all of you, including you Dr. Halsey," he nodded in the direction of Catherine. "We will escort you to the Andromeda System, where we have need of you expertise, both from the Spartans and from you, Doctor."

"Why us?" Paul DeMarco, leader of Fireteam Majestic, spoke up for the first time since entering the room "As far as we're concerned, there seems to be a lot of Spartans in that galaxy already. Why add more?"

"This side of the galaxy, the Milky Way, has almost little to no need for Spartans, as we are seemingly more focused on the Andromeda's situation, plus the fact that there seems to be more bad guys in there than here." The officer answered.

Crimson leader Jake Decks, Callsign "Dent", then spoke up. "Is this mandatory or are we being given a choice here? "

"Well, that's entirely up to you, boys." A female voice sounded off from the doorway, and when they opened up, shock was a given.

Before them was a woman, but taller than any normal woman. She had a Captain's uniform on her and had a rather athletic, yet incredibly strong physique. Her face was slightly marred by wrinkles, but otherwise, she still looked rather beautiful. Her red hair was curled up in a bun, and if one could look closely, they could see some white in it.

"Well, it has been a long time, ain't it fellas?" It was none other than their old Commander from Majestic and Crimson's days in the Infinity. Commander Sarah Palmer.

At once, all Spartans saluted her. "Commander Palmer, sir!" Gabriel Thorne responded to his old CO.

"At ease." She held up her hand and at once, the Spartans sat. Although they found something, off, about their former CO. Aside from her new uniform, of course.

She seemed more relaxed, her posture was more calm and collected,

rather than stiff and restrained. She was even smiling a bit. But the biggest change that was evident was the small ring on her finger than gleamed like gold. It was subtle, but it was enough to tell the Spartans that too much time has passed since then.

Eventually, Randy "Reckless" Grayson spoke out the thoughts of his teammates, and asked "Um, are you married, Commander?"

His teammates glared at Randy. His callsign is a mirror to his personality, and reckless did not just apply this to the battlefield. Randy had been in a situation where he nearly faced court-martial, 5 times and in all of them, he was spared because of his excellent combat record.

What Sarah did next shocked everyone, even Halsey. She smiled genuinely. "It's Captain, Grayson, and yes, I am married. So you should now address me as Captain Lasky."

Everyone in the table, save for John-117, was utterly flabbergasted. There were rumors of Lasky and Palmer having a thing for each other, but the time they entered the cryo tubes and the time they got out had only cemented that rumor to full-blown fact.

Halsey too was rather intrigued. "I'm surprised, considering your personality back then."

"Back then," Sarah emphasized, "I was a hard ass. Time changes everyone, Doctor, even people like me, unless you've stuck in a cryotube like you guys were. And believe me, it does get lonely too." Sarah admitted.

If Palmer was opening up her feeling like this, then the Galaxy has really gone to shit. DeMarco thought.

Master Chief then decided to inquire on Tom Lasky. "How is Admiral Lasky? Is he in command now?" Deep down, the Spartan always knew that Lasky would lead the UNSC one day, given that his intelligence and discipline would make him a prime candidate for the Admiralty.

"Head honcho now. He's gonna be in command for the next 5 years, til he steps down. And I'm following suit, so until then, I'm still in charge for all Spartans in existence, including the Andromeda." She said in her usual commanding voice that made her fellow Spartans fall in line back in the Infinity.

"Wow," Madsen, Majestic's sniper deadpanned. "Next thing you know, she'll be wearing a dress and invite us to tea." He snorted, then chuckled a bit. This continued until a fast moving object nearly perforated the smart mouth in the forehead. His Spartan reflexes were the only thing that saved his life, but not his dignity as he took both himself and the chair he was sitting on to the ground.

"I'm sorry, Madsen, you have to speak up a bit. I can't hear you from all the way down there." Captain Sarah Lasky chuckled, with the whole of Majestic and Crimson fixing their postures rather quickly.

Say what you will of how much Sarah has changed in the decades that came and go, but one thing has not changed: The ability to scare Spartan IVs straight and her ridiculous good aim with anything that can be thrown, or shot.

Deciding that they needed to move on, Jai, leader of Spartan II Grey Team, coughed slightly. "We are getting off track here. I know my team, and between you and me, they want some action. This is all we know how to do anyway, at least for Spartan IIs."

Once again, the CBMI officer shook his head. "Not entirely true." Then he tapped his datapad and soon the room had a holographic display of a Spartan IV holding his helmet in one hand and a magnum at the other, looking handsome, but with some Asiatic features on him.

"This is my replacement, Commander Lance Escandor." Captain Lasky began, looking towards the group. "He leads a battalion of battle-hardened Spartan IV into some of the UNSC's worst or most secretive of battles. He is also part of a UNSC program whose purpose is to rehabilitate some Spartans who have seen too much combat and gets them to living just like any other normal people can. His brother, General David Escandor, is our liason in Naboo. He deals with the defence forces on the planet. That man is one hell of a tactician." Sarah remarked slightly.

"And you believe that?" Kelly-087, one of Master Chief's most trusted allies and a friend, voiced her concerns.

Sarah then smirked. "He's the one who got me into this in the first place." She gestured to the uniform she was wearing. "And was Lasky's best man in wedding, aside from his brother. Say what you will about this Spartan, he knows how to get us Spartans to sit down and take in what we've been fighting for." Sarah said.

The Spartan IIs still looked skeptical, but Dr. Halsey decided to step in. "And it works?"

Sarah nodded. "Lance is the most persistent Spartan I'd ever seen. He never gives up, even if the odds and the people around him are stacked against him."

Dr. Halsey thought this over. She was kind of skeptical that a someone, especially a Spartan IV, could get her Spartans to finally get them to live a life they deserved, and not the one she put them in. But at the same time, she hoped to whatever deity that lived in the universe that this man could help her Spartans. But she still needed to meet the man in order for her to get an accurate assessment. Simple paper work would not be enough.

She would have to meet the man herself if the brass actually goes through with the plan to let Halsey in when they find the artifact/s that are related to the Forerunners.

"Now so far," Captain Lasky began. "We've managed to pinpoint the location for the only known Forerunner artifact that the Absolute Record. It's located here." A holographic display for a somewhat desert planet showed up. "It's Called Mandalore. The kicker is that it is located directly below the city itself. But there seems to be a problem."

Halsey spoke up. "What kind of problem?"

Sarah grimaced. "Now, it's already known to most in the higher

echelon that the Janus Key is THE main forerunner artifact used to identify all known Forerunner artifacts and shield-worlds in the known galaxy. In conjunction with the Absolute Record that we found decades ago, no Forerunner artifact is unknown to us. But there seems to be something, missing, in the database when we used it to find it in the Andromeda."

The good doctor then was intrigued. "Define missing?"

"As in someone had purposely wiped the locations of all forerunner objects in that area, except the one on Mandalore." Sarah said.

"That doesn't make any sense." Halsey suddenly found this odd and disturbing. "I've been to the Absolute Record, myself. I've activated it with my own two hands." She emphasized her prosthetic one as well. "And I've delved into its databanks with the help of Cortana!" She exclaimed, as the digital avatar of the said AI popped up besides the Chief.

"Well, that was during my first scan of the Janus Key, Dr. Halsey." Cortana offered. "When I scanned it again, and in the Andromeda, I found some significant data loss pertaining to specific locations in the galaxy. Heck, the location on Mandalore itself is shoddy at best. It's as if someone wiped that part of the galaxy off the Absolute Record, but did so rather lazily, as we still have some data to existence of Forerunners in the Andromeda. However, while the information was wiped out, we can still track them IF we get to those artifacts in Mandalore. They could provide us with some sort of clue as to why they aren't in the Absolute Record's databanks."

Captain Lasky then received an incoming call, and chose to highlight it all for the group to see Admiral Lasky, husband to Sarah, in an admiral's uniform, with grey and white hair on his scalp, but otherwise, his face was slightly older, with some wrinkles. It seems that UNSC health care has improved ever since the discovery of countless Forerunner technologies in the Milky Way. Immediately, all Spartans saluted to the Admiral, with Master Chief standing up greeting him. "Sir." Lasky chuckled a bit, as the rest followed suit.

In his age, Admiral Thomas Lasky is widely known for both his impeccable intellect in battle, and charismatic leadership during battles that defined his career. Although now it seems that even his own discipline has mellowed slightly as he seems more relaxed than before, just like Sarah. "

"Well, Well, is everyone now brought up to speed? And didn't I say not to call me sir?" Lasky said in mild amusement before motioning everyone to sit down. His face then turned serious.

"Force of habit." Chief replied coolly.

"I'm save the pleasantries for later and get right to the heart of it." Thomas Lasky then turned to Catherine Halsey. "The whole of UNSC higher command has been in an uproar ever since finding you. Half of them want you in a 4x4 cell, and half of them want you 6 feet under. Now I managed a compromise, since I'm not willing to play judge, jury and executioner, especially for a civilian like you."

Halsey was smiling slightly, grateful for Lasky for even trying. _Even after all this time, Lasky still has qualms about killing civilians. The more things change, the more they stay the same. _Despite her well known animosity between her and the UNSC brass, she still found Lasky's views noble, if a bit naïve as well. Deep down, she always felt like that man was a proper gentleman, and was kinder than most of her bosses at ONI.

Lasky continued on. "I'm willing to let Dr. Halsey work in the Andromeda provided that she is under a 24/7 hour guard and if she decides to settle down, she would be kept under guard and under no circumstances will she allowed to access outside communications or leave the premises without UNSC Higher Command knowing and approving it."

Halsey grimaced. She knew the UNSC would never let her go completely. She was chastising herself slightly for thinking otherwise.

"Alright, if we can get on to other details we can discuss." Thomas Lasky continued on.

"Just one." Halsey interjected. "Can I be the one to help my Spartans reacclimatize to living with society?" She was basically pertaining to Lance's ability to help her Spartans. She may have had her doubts, but unless she found a better way to get her Spartans their lives before she "recruited" them, then he would have to work with him. Her Spartans were arguing with Dr. Halsey, but she gave a stern look at all of them, basically telling her that she has really made up her mind about the whole issue. Eventually, all arguments died down.

Sarah nodded. "We figured you would say that as much. The UNSC high board will allow this, as long as it's ethical enough. Or are you still fond of playing God?" She asked sarcastically. Halsey knew this was a jab at her own work during the Spartan II project.

Decades before, Halsey would have given a smart aleck remark on how slow or stupid everyone is compared to herself. After all, there is a certain aura of arrogance that comes with her knowledge. But the years have been very kind to the UNSC, and extends to its people. They were still weary, sure. But they were more trusting than most of her peers back before she was with ONI.

Now, she will have to find a way to redeem herself. She is tired of the suspicion and wants to set the record straight. "Rest assured, I am tired of using people as pawns for one lifetime." With everything else now settled, the group then returned to whatever rooms they were assigned to for rest.

{Andromeda Galaxy, Glinn's Field}

"What are you doing here? And why are you with her?" Anakin Skywalker asked Barriss Offee, while still keeping a steely gaze on Asajj Ventress, with his hand on the lightsaber.

Asajj kept her hands on her side, but she nodded and bowed slightly. "Well, what can I say? I get around fast." She smirked. Before Anakin could say anything, though, Lance beat him to the punch.

"Agent Ventress, Agent Barriss, pleasure to meet you." Lance shook their hands, and saluted to both of them, who did the same, to the confusion of Anakin.

"Likewise, sir." Barriss greeted with a crisp military stature. "We are here and ready for orders." Asajj said, before they relaxed their postures.

Anakin was fed-up "Okay, before anyone else goes on, can someone please explain to me what is going on? Barriss, we all thought you were dead for those 2 years, and suddenly you show up and you seem to be aligned with the Terrans. What happened?"

Asajj and Barriss chuckled, like both were good friends for a long time, which only added both confusion, shock and above all else, frustration. Truly, his head felt like someone left 3 thermal detonators next to an ammo cache and promptly strapped themselves to his brain.

Barriss decided to tell Skywalker herself. "I finally saw truth."

Anakin was confused to the nature of that statement, so Barriss decided to elaborate further.

"It had been 2 years into the war when I was stationed on Umbara with Besalisk Master Pong Krell. Do you remember him?" She asked him, although it could be stated that there was a tinge of bitterness in her tone.

Anakin grimaced. He could not forget. He remembered how his men described how far the Jedi Master fell to the dark side, but he also put the lives of his men in his command. The Besalisk Jedi had earned ire, especially Anakin. "Who could forget? When I heard the reports, I could hardly believe that he would have fallen so far."

Barriss was more somber in tone now. "It was not without reason, Master Skywalker."

She walked over to the railings, with her face now illuminated by the lights around her. Ventress leaned on the wall parallel to the railings, allowing her partner to explain everything. "I had been assigned to him after a skirmish in the Outer Rim. When I arrived, Master Krell and I began to push towards the capital. We had been successful, but I noticed how he commanded the troopers. He regarded them no more than he regarded droids with sub-par intelligence. He simply threw troopers like rotten meat at the enemy."

Even though Anakin knew through Rex's report, hearing it from Barriss seemingly made it sound worse.

"At first, I thought it was just combat stress, but it became clear as the skirmish dragged on. During an attack on an Umbaran airbase, Krell pushed on, ignoring advice and better battle strategies and simply, sending troopers to their death. Hardcase and Fives were able to take it, but the victory was hollow: We lost so many troopers and vehicles, and the worst part, was that he was completely indifferent to the losses." She said, pausing only to let the information sink in Anakin's mind.

"After the battle, I snuck out and eavesdropped on the troopers, so that I can discern their feelings on the matter."

"You eavesdropped?" Anakin asked. "You couldn't just ask them yourself?"

"They would try and say something that would not make them look bad, or they would say it, but would hold back more concerns, and not give me a better picture of the whole situation. They don't simply trust anyone but you."

Anakin was about to argue when he held back. True, his men were honest with him, but they may not be so trusting to other Jedi Commanders, since most, if not all, were as lenient as Skywalker. And after Umbara, it was little wonder they had some level of apprehension when they had different commanders aside from Ahsoka or Anakin.

Barriss continued. "They were voicing their discontent with Fives openly questioning Master Krell's military competence, but your Captain kept them in line, even though he had his doubts. Those doubts came full circle when we finally began to attack the Capital. Fives and Jesse had other ideas than "committing suicide runs" on Krell's orders. Fives, alongside Jesse and Hardcase, were somehow able to "acquire" Umbaran fighters to sabotage enemy supply fleet. They succeeded but lost Hardcase."

Anakin frowned; he still took Clone deaths hard. Lance nodded silently, taking in what she was saying.

"When they returned, Master Krell ordered for Jesse and Fives to be court-martialed and executed. Even I found the nature of the punishment severe. When they were about to be killed, Fives appealed to all of them, but Dogma, Krell's most loyal soldier, would not hear any of it. But it was a small consolation, since the execution squad deliberately missed their shots. Krell would have punished Rex for his part of the debacle, when we received an alert where the enemy was using Republic armor and vehicles to attack the base."

"But they were not the enemy." Anakin said softly. He looked in Barriss' eyes and saw telltale signs of water in them, and realized that Rex's report on Umbara was nothing compared to first-hand witness.

"Rex realized it first, and ran to the enemy, and we were able to stop before more casualties increased. But the damage was done. We just learned that we were fighting the 212th Attack Battalion." She stopped and choked on it a bit. Clearly, that memory distressed her to lose her composure. Lance stood up and put his hand on her shoulder to give his support, with Asajj doing the same with a look on her face that was totally unassociated with Anakin's experiences with her: pity and understanding.

"That bad, huh?" Lance asked softly. Barriss nodded slightly and soon she composed herself. "Sorry, sir." She bowed, but Lance shook his head. "We all have moments like those. It would have been more concerning if you weren't affected." Anakin asked "Are you alright?" Clearly, he was concerned.

"Have you ever seen a Clone cry, Skywalker?" Barriss asked. Anakin

shook his head emphatically, unsure of what to think. He never saw his men break composure before, let alone sob or cry. To hear her say that was something even Rex failed or purposely forgot to mention.

"When the all the fire stopped, brother finally looked upon brother, and soon we saw the full extent. The 212th lost their platoon leader, and I was present. Before he died, he told us that he received orders from _General Krell _to attack us, claiming that the airbase was taken and the enemy was using our weapons to hold their positions." She stressed the word with malice. Anakin sees the toll that particular battle had done to her. "I had left ahead to confront Master Krell. I told him of what had transpired, and I truly believed that he was innocent. But he did not even hide it; he arrogantly acknowledged that fact before engaging me. It was clear to me then that he fell to the Dark Side, very far down." She explained, with Anakin nodding in acknowledgement. He had read the reports about it, and she put up one good fight, before Krell got the upper hand.

"He was strong. Arrogant, but strong. He was ferocious in combat, and whatever brought him to this was, for lack of a better term, strengthening him. I would have been cut down, had Rex not interfered. We chased him into the forest, where he ambushed us until one of the Clones used the indigenous wildlife to trap him and allowed us to capture him." Barriss explained further, pausing only to take her breath.

She then continued onwards. "Rex and I proceeded to question him in the brig. He told me of a vision, where the Republic burned, with a new order rising from the ashes of both the Republic and the Jedi. He wanted to be a part of that. He wanted a place in that, _hell_, as the Terrans described it to me." She gestured with her hands. "He then told us that not only did he feed misinformation about the battle, but also led the Umbarans to us at the airbase, and for once, I saw Rex's resolve failing. Krell would have been executed by Rex had Krell not poisoned his mind. So I did what had to be done myself." She proclaimed, grimly.

"You were the one who executed Krell?" Anakin was clearly shocked and saddened. Rex said he was the one who pulled the trigger in his report.

Barriss nodded. "As he died, he showed me the vision, and it still haunts me still. It was different to hear him describe a vision and another to see for it myself. The vision was strong and so horrible, I was knocked out for 2 days. When I came to, I was in Coruscant, where I gave my report. Though I participated in many battles after that, but the vision would haunt me still. Only after I "died" and was under the Terrans did I confide in them my dark secret. " She sighed.

Anakin narrowed his eyes. "You told the Terrans?" His voice held no hostility, only sorrow. Her faith in the Jedi must have been pretty low for her to be unable to confide with anyone, even with her master and her friends, about it.

Barriss only nodded once more. "I tried to confide in Master Yoda, but he seemed to be distracted or unable to be reached. And there was a point in my life that I could not take it anymore. The final reason why I left came during a space battle between a small Separatist

scout fleet and a Republic Battle Group. They had caught us on the time the Battle Group had to perform maintenance on the targeting systems. We saw the Separatists, but the diagnostics were not complete, leaving our IFF readers unable to discern friend from foe, but the systems worked fine, and the Captain in charge decided to use ship-to-ship communications to identify each other. And our scanners picked up 5 additional targets, but we could not determine their threat class. Nevertheless, we engaged them, even the unknowns.

"

"The Battle Group won that day, but when the diagnostics came, "She paused, as if the words were stuck to her throat.

Asajj realized her partner's inability to say it, so she decided to step in. "The Republic's IFF signals finally came through and they had discovered that they had hit a commercial cruiser and 4 merchant vessels. All innocent bystanders whose only crime was appearing at the wrong place at the wrong time."

Anakin's eyes bugged out. "I've never heard of it."

"That was because the details of the attack had been completely covered up." Barriss explained. "I have been told never to divulge the details of such an attack to the populace, by-" She was interrupted by Lance.

"Palpatine, correct?" Lance cut in, and Anakin was flabbergasted.

"Yes, he met me after that we had returned. He met me personally and requested me to keep it quiet, as it may damage the image and the war effort to the Republic. At the time, I thought he was really looking out for me, but when I looked back at it, he was only doing this to keep his precious "Republic" unfettered by such scandals, disrupting whatever plans that did not involve the blood of innocents."

"Palpatine." Anakin once said that name with respect and kindness. Now he wanted whatever Terrans used for mouthwash to rinse his mouth whenever he says that name.

"I accepted but before long, I was haunted more and more, from both the vision and the tragedy that claimed innocent lives. I could not live the lie anymore, yet I did not want my actions to jeopardize everything the Republic strived towards, so during a space skirmish, where me and my old Master Luminara Unduli were forced to retreat, I found the perfect opportunity to disappear forever."

"Suicide?! You actually tried to kill yourself?" Anakin was pained now. On one hand, he was angry that she gave up, but on the other hand, she understood why she had to do it. After all, who would want to live with the guilt of killing innocents?

"But it did not succeed, not fully." Barriss continued. "I survived, but barely. I my life support failed and I would have become one with the Force had the H.G. Odessa, Terran cruiser not have come upon me." Barriss said, and then pulled out a hologram of a Terran officer who seemed to be in his middle 20's, wearing a crisp black, military uniform. "His name was Lt. Joseph Roberts, a top officer amongst the Central Bureau of Military Intelligence."

Anakin nodded. "My master told me about him. He was the one who discovered Order 66."

"Correct. When he first found me, he came to my aid almost immediately. Before I blacked out, I told him not to bring me back, and to let me die." Barriss bowed her head.

Anakin pressed on for more information, but Lance stopped him there. "I'm sorry Anakin, but I think we are getting off tangent here." Anakin slightly glared at the man, but Lance did not flinch. Barriss shook her head. "I will tell you the rest of it, but only in the presence of the Council and my old masters and friends."

Frustrated, but knowing that time was short, Anakin nodded, hoping to hear how she became such a prominent member of the CBMI, alongside Ventress. Lance nodded and turned to them "Roberts was adamant that I bring you onboard for the Mandalore OP. As soon as the last of my team come in, we move for Mandalore." Anakin held up his hands in protest.

"Hold on, if you are intent on taking on Darth Maul and his brother, the Jedi should be involved in this." Anakin said. Asajj glared at him. "Are suggesting that we are completely inept in taking on those two Sith warriors?"

Once again, the Knight simply shook his head. "They are not to be underestimated. Commander Escandor," Anakin used Lance's rank to emphasize his point. "I can personally vouch for these two and they are the good warriors." The two CBMI officers in question looked at him. "But, I have to argue that you should have some of our people ready to assist. I fear that they may not be able to stop them, alone."

Barriss and Asajj were about to voice their concerns to Anakin when Lance held his hand up. "Then don't allow that fear to cloud the fact that they are not Jedi. You see, they are not your basic rogue Jedi who simply fall in a dark hole that they can't climb back up."

Anakin moved forward "I mus-"His protest was cut off when a plasma sword materialized in his face, with Barriss holding the hilt. "Master Skywalker, while you have some valid points, you are assuming that the Terrans are throwing sticks at the Sith. Well, it turns out that the Terrans know more about swordfighting than just slugthrowing." Barriss said in a determined fire burning in her eyes. Asajj then pulled out her weapons, and they just materialized out of her waist. They were golden blades than seemed to hum and glow, like a light saber, but has an orange tinge to it. (**AN: Think of Raiden's Sword in Metal Gear Rising, but more orange**).

"We aren't Jedi, nor are we Sith anymore. We are simply Forsaken, disregarded by both Orders, and as such, we are not bound by the codes that made us Sith and Jedi." Barriss declared with determination and fire, something that was completely new and shocking to Anakin, as he had always seen the Mirilian as aloof and shy. Clearly, her time amongst the Terrans left one good impression on her.

"I will be the one to confront the Masters in time, but for now, I

would ask you to wait until I approach them. Do not tell anyone, even Master Yoda. Can you do this, Master Skywalker?" She asked politely. Anakin was silent for a few moments before he gave his answer.

"Yes, your secret is safe with me, until you say otherwise." He replied with slight confidence.

"Thank you." Barriss bowed in gratitude. Anakin then spun to face Asajj. "Now I don't know how you came to be with the Terrans, but they both they and Barriss trust you. So I am going to lay off, for their sake, but you even try to-" Asajj took that prosecution and ground that to a halt when she simply slapped him. Lance was amused a bit and Barriss seemed to be both shocked and amused at the sight.

"Alright, Skywalker. You've said enough for me to know when you are threatening me when I try to backstab someone. Unlike all the rest though, the Terrans are actually more trustworthy and strong enough to merit my allegiance. Believe me, they aren't the whimpering cowards that Dooku had viewed them, and they can help me get even with Savage, so to me, I shouldn't even try to backstab them."

"You mean to get revenge?" Anakin was still skeptical.

"The Terrans have a more interesting way to view it: getting even is much more satisfying."

"What's the difference?"

"The difference," Asajj began, sheathing her swords. "Is that the person does not necessarily need to be killed for me to get my retribution."

"And are you really gonna let him suffer?" Anakin asked.

"I'm more merciful now, so I think a simple bullet to the head will work." She patted her Magnum on her hip. Anakin then noticed that both ladies had guns on their side.

"Just remember: I'm watching you." Anakin narrowed his eyes at her, before he turned to Lance and thanked him before leaving. This discussion is best done with the Council, anyway.

That left only the 2 CBMI agents alone with the Commander. "Now, I believe we have some things to discuss."

****FINALLY!** So now we move on to the next story, but I am using characters from that God awful Star Wars Kinect, since they seem to be underused, so I want them to have their chance in the spotlight. Remember, I am putting in characters most people don't know and bringing them up for this. Look up the Star Wars wiki to find it. I'm also taking cues from WarFrame and Metal Gear Rising. ******

****Secondary story: **The Echoes of Combat**

{Glinn's Field, Barracks, During the Therapy sessions with Dr. Schofield.}

Jedi Master Mavra Zane, a Human female Jedi with black hair, which was tied into a bun at both sides of her head, and distinguished with

white tattoos on her face, had been spending the last few hours comforting most of the Padawans present in the base. Ever since the fall, as most Jedi now dubs their defeat, Mavra has been busy comforting her Padawans that were under her care during the attack, as well as the Knights she trained to come to terms, even though her own doubts were steadily eating her alive, but she kept it well, better than the other Masters.

But change was coming, and the most talked about change amongst Jedi AND even some UNSC personnel, is the Jedi Code for no attachments.

It had come to light before, but now, it has now blown up into a full on debate. Some hardliners are criticizing the Council for changing their stances, but the majority simply shut them up, since most of them have had said attachments, yet without the cons of it getting a Jedi wielding red lightsaber shooting lightning from their fingers. She knew a Jedi named Serra Keto, former Apprentice to Master Cin Drallig, was dating some UNSC soldier earlier on. Although it did not end in a romantic coupling, they remained good friends, and they hang out a lot of times. The Master simply smiled. Another time for romance will come, when they mature much more in the coming years.

For Mavra, she was a personally glad that such a change was made. She was still uninterested in finding someone, but now she feels as though her emotions are less of a burden now. But her duty came first to the Padawans she was entrusted to train and nurture. Though she was one of the few who were not burdnened with the destruction of the temple, she could relate in their pain. Hence she was there to comfort the Padawans as well. But training did not stop there, so sooner or later she would have to continue her lessons.

She lost two of her former Padawans during the siege of the Temple, and their loss weighed heavily on her soul. The first one was Tren Alvar, a dark-skinned Human Male who sacrificed himself to save 6 younglings from becoming smoking piles of meat, and the second was another dark-skinned Human Female named Zeetara Maan, who pulled a UNSC soldier out of harm's way, while being vaporized by an AT-TE.

Right now, she was intent on training the next generation. As long as it can focus their minds away from their losses, she would have no problems. Her former students were joining her and she accepted their aid, as she had about at least 50 Padawans under her care. The majority of the Masters are either busy integrating into Terran military and civilian infrastructure, or are still recovering from their losses from the attack.

She led her Padawans into one of the UNSC's simulation rooms, areas which UNSC Personnel practice war time scenarios in different conditions, to which they called "War Games." They allow them to practice live rounds and when they die, they "respawn" as they call it to try again, and they are allowed to spectate when they "died". Mavra was rather confused as to how they casually brush off the natural way of things in a single chamber, but her practical side saw a better way to train Padawans without actually getting them killed for real.

She enjoyed talking to her former Padawans, namely because they

considered her to be a "mother" of sorts, and she took some comfort in those thoughts. She also wanted people who she knew she could confide in. Kai Rees and Fenella Druce were the most stubborn, and most dedicated of the Padawans she trained, and also the ones who confided their doubts the most in her, and she too confided with them as well. She enjoys talking to them as they are what she believes are the future of the Order.

They finally reached the chambers, but it would seem as though they are not the first to be using it.

Mavra saw two large droids facing off against each other. But one of her students recognized who those metal giants were. "Spartans." Ara Barotta, a Twi'lek Jedi Knight, breathed out in awe.

Master Zane had only heard rumors of such warriors during her time on Glinn's Field, but many others saw them in direct action, and are a subject of debate amongst the militant Jedi in conversation circles. She had heard of things done by them that a normal Clone or even a Clone Commando would o, such as single-handedly destroy an AT-TE or even an AT-AT, or charging into a full squad of Clones and come out unscathed. Their combat prowess that made them so legendary amongst the UNSC and has now spread amongst the Jedi.

It is also known that these warriors are also augmented beyond the skills of their fellow Terrans, giving them an edge and their suits only enhancing them in addition to their augmentations.

In short: They are fabled Terran Warriors capable of sending even the most skilled Jedi to the morgue. At least that was what one overeager Togrutan Padawan said when she claimed she saw them in action. She even saw one of them pick up one fallen Jedi's light saber and began twirling it around like a skilled Master. Their exploits were nothing short of legendary. At least after the Coruscant battle.

Right now, she was witnessing something rare: Spartans sparring with strange, yet clearly defined bladed swords, but clearly have enough visual flourishes to define them as an energy weapon, similar to a lightsaber, as it emitted a very small hum. They parried, struck and jabbed in a way that only seasoned Jedi Masters could attempt. She then remembered that the Terrans' experience with bladed weapons came from their many cultures that stemmed from their attack postures.

The blue Spartan was using a long, one sided energy blade that had the advantage of length and flexibility, and the Red Spartan was using a smaller blade, but was clearly faster and he was using an energy shield to compensate for the smaller sword's lack of defensive capabilities. They moved so fluidly and in a graceful manner it was almost as if the two were dancing. The Red Spartan was more up close as he used his shield to block the other Spartan, but he deftly side-stepped, and moved to flank, but the Red one was more flexible than his stature and dodged the swipe. This continued on until one of the Padawans coughed a bit and both men went into a defensive posture and then glancing at their guests.

"Sorry." A Meek Togrutan child squeaked. Even with helmets, the way they looked at the group made most of them shiver a bit. It unnerved even Master Zane.

They stopped their posturing when they saw more Jedi come in and sheathed their weapons in a strange yet enthralling way as the blade somehow dematerialized in front of their eyes and bowed slightly to each other before they addressed the group before them. "Are you going to use the room?" The blue Spartan asked. Master Zane nodded. "Yes, although we would not take up much space, so we can be able to use the room with enough room for your training."

"Your name?" The Red Spartan asked politely.

"Master Mavra Zane, at your service." She bowed slightly and was greeted in kind by the two other Spartans. She then introduced her Padawans, new and former Padawans of hers to the Spartans in charge.

"Ara Barotta," Mavra began, gesturing to the Twi'lek wearing fitting robes that compliment her form. "Fenella Druce," Zane pointed over to the young blond woman and bowed to the Spartans slightly, smiling brightly as a sunshine.. "Kai Rees," The young, handsome man with blue eyes and brown hair greeted the Spartans politely. "Kasi Sha'Rhil," A woman with her hair combed to one side said hello. "Dar Singe," A male Zabrak with yellow and black markings greeted the men with respect. "Cho Zeh'Bra," A male Bith Jedi with blue robes waved at the Spartan. "And Taal'ri." A female Togruta, smiled at them sincerely.

"Gladius." The Red Spartan greeted, and the Blue Spartan then greeted at him back. "Lightning."

"Do you have real names?" Kasi asked them, slightly annoyed that they might be facing Clones in better armor, since she knew that Clones put nicknames to cover up the fact that their real names are actually numbers and designations.

"We have names, but they're classified." The blue one declared. Mavra decided to drop it and she then walked to their side of the chamber, mindful of the stares the Spartans have given to them.

Kasi was the first to speak up once they believed that they were out of earshot from the Spartans. "They are a creepy bunch, huh?" Kasi had been known to be very blunt and her personality extended to her appearance. Kai, ever the level-headed person, shook his head. "The way they carried themselves made me count my blessings that they never joined the Sith." Cho and Dar shook their heads in agreement.

Fenella then walked in step with Kai. Ever since the siege of the Temple, they have been growing closer since. "Well, at least we can count on them to help us." With that, everyone nodded.

They then settled to teaching the Padawans, with Mavra dividing the task of training the Padawans with her former students. All the while the Spartans left for a while to take a quick break. The Jedi were able to train in peace for at least ten minutes before they showed up again, but they were not alone, as 3 more Spartans, 2 females given that their helmets were not equipped and one male Spartan carrying a rather wicked battle axe.

The Padawans were enthralled but their teachers quickly got them back to their lessons, even though that their own interest was now

peaking.

The Spartans went to their side and at changed the settings so that their side resembled a Japanese dojo, something that the Jedi found very interesting. It looked similar to their training grounds but was less metallic and more wooden. The wooden dojo looked as though it would have given in to the weight of both the Spartans and the armor they wore, but it held. The Spartans Gladius and Lightning then drew their swords again and the bowed to each other before they settled into a combat stance. They circled each other before they struck. Their blades sang and shrieked as they collided in a furious and fast manner. Soon, even Master Zane found their duel more interesting as Padawan and Knight alike became transfixed by the sight of the Spartans fighting each other.

Though she is trained to have complete discipline over her actions, Master Zane was actually amused with the spectacle before her, but she realized that she hasn't fought against anything for a long time, since they left. It had been 4 days since the end of the Clone Wars, but her reflexes seemed to be more honed to combat, perhaps even more than simple battle reflex. She actually enjoyed the combat, even though she was a peacekeeper.

Years of continuous war and fighting had somehow given her more than better fighting skills; she had begun to enjoy it. It was a dark path and she knew it was wrong, but the power that came with her abilities, plus the multitude of foes that came before the Republic had slowly made her more aggressive, fierce and deadly. It was slow, but even some of the most renowned Masters, especially Mace Windu, are more susceptible to the Dark Side. She had learned to quell such dark thoughts, but the way the Spartans moved made her yearn for war once again.

She decided that she needed to get it out of her system, the only way she knew how. True, their combat prowess was legendary, but it should at least be enough to stop her blood lust from becoming a problematic situation, like so many Knights in the Order. She would not like this one bit.

On the plus side, her students will get a kick out of it.

She stepped towards the Spartans when Gladius and Lightning stopped sparring. The two females, Lheanna "Lady" Solis, and her medic, Lawrence "Wren" Yomomoto, noticed her first and Lady stepped forward. "May I help you?" A young woman with long black flowing hair, and her face was friendly enough.

"Yes. I was wondering if you could allow me to spar with one of your brothers-in-arms?" Mavra asked, hoping the Spartans would not question the nature of her request.

Surprisingly, Lheanna had no problems with that. In fact, she knew the exact cause of her request. "Let me guess: It has to do with the fact you are going bonkers that you are not slicing up droids, huh?" Mavra nearly choked and her students now looked at her with both shock and concern.

Before she recovered, Wren beat her to the punch. "Before you ask, I had 5 Jedi Knights ask for the same thing. I sparred with Rahm Kota myself, with my associate Circus," She gestured to the Spartan beside

her, who flashed a rather dashing smile. Mavra was unfazed but Fenella, Kasi, and Ara blushed and sighed. Dar and Cho looked irritated, and Taal looked a bit dreamy. Mavra had met lots of flirtatious men before.

Wren continued on. "Circus here fought against Mace Windu, but it was friendly. So don't be awkward about asking a spar. That's what we're here for. Apparently, Master Yoda realized that some of you still have an inbuilt battle reflex that won't stop; at least, he did after some doctors from the psyche department recognized their symptoms. When he was asked about the more combat proficient of the Jedi, he noted that they seemed to be restless, more irritable, and aggressive even. He approached Lance, after being recommended by Dr. Schofield. Feel free to thank our boss after this." She gestured to the Spartans gathered in the chamber.

Mavra felt more relieved, but her students, particularly her former ones, were more concerned and gathered around her. She looked down when Fenella asked. "Is it true, Master?" Worry was on her face, along with her fellow Jedi. Mavra simply smiled. "Yes, but now, at the very least, I can put those demons to rest, with their help. Meditation cannot soothe the lingering desire to be on the battlefield once more. I am hoping a more direct confrontation will suffice." She said. She was expecting more outrageous remarks, but her students instead smiled and took their places on the side of the arena.

Fenella and Kai remained with her. "We will back you up, Master Zane. We aren't going to leave you hanging." Kai announced to her. She smiled back and hugged the two of them, much to their shock, and the others. But in the end, they all smiled. Kai and Fenella hugged back, while the rest gathered around their old Master and did the same. The Spartans took note and found it slightly touching.

Lady took the dojo and she drew two machete blades and simply assembled her helmet to cover her face, her hair now digitizing into the helmet. The Jedi present were astonished. Mavra was impressed but then took out her yellow lightsaber and began to take her combat stance in the middle. Jake "Circus" Madrigal began to move to the middle where he eyed the two.

He began calling out the rules. "Alright, first, the simulation chambers allow for lethal weapons to be used without consequence, so feel free to let loose, but I'm setting the amount of times you can be killed to about 3, so at the very least, there will be 3 bodies from each of you two." Simulation tech allowed for "respawns" while simultaneously allowing dead replicas of themselves to litter the battlefield to mark where they died. The Jedi were slightly disturbed at the way the UNSC brushes off the natural laws of life to improve their ability to wage war.

"Second, the arena around the two combatants will be enclosed in an energy sphere, in case things get really hectic and to prevent outside interference. Whatever happens inside stays inside. Other than that, all is fair game. Are we clear?" Circus questioned the two. With only silence to answer him, he took it as a yes.

"Well, then, let's get down to it." _Circus is good_, Mavra guessed, _he made it sound like a seasoned Pod-Racer announcer. _

She steadied her blade and Lady did as well as the energy sphere began to encase the two ladies in its confines. Circus took to the controls.

"Round 1, FIGHT!" And with that, the two ladies charged at each other.

****AND WE END IT THERE!** Alright, I left it here so that we can have a vote for this, in my poll in my account. If no-one votes, I'll take it upon myself, and screw the backlash of favoritism. So I'm letting everyone choose. Only I can see your votes, so please give me a good reason not to pick one over the other.******

****Reply, and Review!****

****Oh, and before I forget, if you don't see a poll in the profile page, just say it in your review. DON'T FORGET!****

9. Episode 9

****OKAY HERE IT IS.** 343 Studios, Disney owns these franchises.******

****Alright,** some people are bitching about how OP the UNSC is in HALO: The Andromeda War, that's because the Tech I bring in here in the Chain will give them that edge, but in what form? I was introducing new Spartan weapons and new UNSC Marine weapons for the infantry, but later on, I will introduce some rather wicked tech for the ships, and making MAC rounds even more powerful than before, so stop whining about how OP the UNSC is. It is because they improve and learn to keep up with their neighbors, as they have the numerical disadvantage.******

****Also,** I've been Playing Company of Heroes 2. It gave me some more in-depth thought of how war should be won, and fought. Should a man be executed for deserting his post simply to help his commander? Should a man retreat to save civilians only to be shot by his commanding officer, and call that action treason? I was given much thought about them. I really recommend playing this game on PC.

Episode 9: â€|Sceleribus parce noscendae sunt (â€|One must learn to forgive the transgressions of others.)

{One week later, Worth's upper atmosphere}

Dr. Halsey and her Spartan IIs, plus the IVs, were getting anxious.

It had been a full week since their debriefing, yet they were finally here. While they had a brand-new, revolutionary slipspace engine, CBMI was still working out the kinks, so for now, they had to use regular slipspace to get to their location, which was about a week away. During that time, they used every data pad, terminal or holo table that had a dedicated information server to the Andromeda. The day after their informative debriefing, they moved to a nearby CBMI Prowler and were sent on their way to Harvest, before they would be transferred to another CBMI Prowler again for security reasons, to their destination in Worth, in the Andromeda.

Dr. Halsey had two reasons for doing this. First, was the knowledge of Forerunner or even Precursor tech in the Andromeda galaxy. She knew the Librarian did not deceive her when she said the Janus Key would reveal all locations of Forerunner tech in the _known _galaxy, but did not show any Forerunner tech location in the galaxy next door, aside from a small beacon located in a wayward planet called Mandalore. She knew that whoever had access to the Absolute Record did not want whoever was sniffing around for Forerunner tech to stay away. Clearly, it was a mystery that she wanted to solve, as her own curiosity got the better of her.

The Second reason was for her Spartans. For this Commander Lance "Overlord" Escandor to get her Red Team Spartan IIs to get them to adjust to society must be pretty good, but she had her doubts. She wanted to know whether she can entrust the man to get her Spartans the life they deserved. And if allowed to, aid in that transition.

Right now, she was looking at a data pad that pertained to the Jedi, a multi-species group of warrior monks that specialized in solving problems, diplomatically or aggressively. She was rather fascinated with the idea of The Force, as it basically describes the idea of telekinesis and mind-reading. But it was how they recruited their members that gave her interest. Not only are they no different from how the Spartan II program got their recruits, but they have been doing it for centuries. Human rights groups could have a field day with them.

_Well, after me, of course. _Halsey thought.

She would like to meet their leaders, to gauge their own intentions and give her a picture on how they operated. Recently, they had experienced a tremendous change where their own Code of celibacy has been vanquished, allowing their members to have significant others and allowing their feelings to be expressed more. The Scientist in her is excited at the prospect of studying them, but her colder part of her personality that had developed with the genius she was known for had just told that part to shove it up its ass.

She had much to do first.

The speakers began to activate as its Captain was announcing their arrival to the planet. General Chernof had made sure their arrival was not publicly announced due to some certain members of the UNSC holding a grudge on her for using children as weapons. Achievements or no, she made a lot of enemies, multiplied with human rights groups and semi-family members out to sacrifice her to some blood god if they ever got the chance.

Halsey chuckled. Her idea of humor is rather morbid and creepy.

Back on topic, General Chernof wanted this to be played low-key. If word got out that the Infamous Dr. Catherine Halsey was spotted in the Andromeda, either the UNSC gets her, or even worse, the now crowned Emperor of the Galactic Empire, Palapatine, might just risk war to gain the advantage over them.

So, after they took the last CBMI Prowler, they entered the atmosphere in two Pelicans. One Pelican had Spartan IIs, and the

other had Spartan IVs from the rescue attempt, including Fireteam Napalm.

As for the matter of where they would stay, a CDF operation base located somewhere in a wilderness area can serve as the perfect place for her and her Spartans to stay. But for the time, they were heading to Glinn's field first, to meet with Commander Escandor, and his brother for a briefing of the things to come. Secretly, though, Halsey hoped she would be allowed to access the Jedi's information servers, since as guardians of the Republic for many centuries, she can better understand what is going on, what technologies are used here, and if there is a way to improve on them.

It was silent with the IIs, save for John and Cortana, who've been chatting it up recently. Halsey smiled, knowing that her creation, her "daughter", was breaking his shell, and she hoped this "Lance" person would help.

She read a few files on him, discreetly. While CBMI locked her out of the servers, that did not mean she did not find a way. Despite all their high talk about "the latest in digital defense," the whole foundation was based from old ONI codes that Halsey knew how to bypass.

She just finished reading on the debriefing of New Sentosa, and frowned. As extremely promising as his record claims him to be, Sentosa seemed to be that one large black stain that seemed to be whittled out, yet still visible to others. While she did find his reasoning for doing what he did logical, and commended him that he was doing it while emotionally compromised, but it hurt and hit too close to home.

She could have done that herself in the first place, as she had conceived the Spartan II project out of her own grief and pain when Insurrectionists had hit a city she was visiting in. From the way the man moved out of combat, he was a jovial man, likeable, and relatable, and on the battlefield, he fights almost as good as her Spartan IIs. Almost.

Still, she knew that if her Spartans would have any chance at this, she would be the one to guide them out by herself, and if she was going to do it without a hitch, she would need the Commander's help.

Meanwhile on the other Pelican, Crimson, Majestic and even Napalm were doing a little bonding of their own, sharing experiences, and ultimately see who's the better team. Sofia grinned as the challenge of facing some oldies from the time. Though most of them cringed when they were called that, even some of the II's twitched slightly. The IVs took some offense, but they eventually got over it. Right now, though, they were having a semi-serious discussion concerning the UNSC in Andromeda.

For one thing, Aliens are starting to get positions within the defense force of Worth. From certain people within the UNSC, if Admiral Morrison went ahead to solidify their military independence from the Milky Way, he would have to recruit from the locals in the galaxy, meaning that soon, Twi'leks and Togrutans would be joining the UNSC Marine Corps or even ODSTs if it pushes through. Although this would take months, or even years to approve, most UNSC officers

and officials support the move so that when there is a true war coming out, the UNSC will have enough manpower to stave off the Empire should they intend to declare war.

"I'm telling you, guys. Sooner or later, they're gonna get these blue chicks in an ODSF outfit, and years after that, they're gonna make Spartan out of them. I'm telling you guys, humans are being replaced by hot, sexy aliens." Madsen said in a semi-serious tone before Tedra slapped the back of his head.

"Ow, quit being such a dick. Besides, I still find it strange we're letting aliens in from the start, it still feels weird."

DeMarco nodded. "Hear that. Humans and aliens living together for centuries. IF anyone told me that 2 decades ago, I would have called them crazy." He admitted. Crimson found it just as weird as their namesake was also attached in the Lost Legion Spartan IV unit.

Jake Decks was simply reading from his TACPAD when his Heavy Weapons specialist, Charles "Charlemagne" Abbot tapped his shoulder. "What do you think, sir? I personally think that this is a good idea, letting the UNSC do this. At least the xenophobia can be wiped out with this tactic."

Jake nodded. "At least I won't see some marine taking his pistol out because someone has a split-mouth, taller than him, or looks like the Elephant man. I'm fine with it."

"Really, sir?" Crimson's only female member and sniper, Fiona "Oculus" Torres, voiced out. She is very reserved most of the time, but has been known to be a complete party animal when 2 dozen beers are involved. Decks knew that she was simply shy, and wanted to fit in. She got into the IV program to make her parents proud, but when 2 decades of your life go by and they're six feet under, she can be pretty distraught. She was practically silent the whole damn debriefing on Reach on only talked when she was asking questions. Now she seemed more hostile and slightly xenophobic, or at least, that is what she is on the outside. Her green-dyed hair matched her Jasmine colored eyes perfectly, as her face was petite and her face had her roots in Western European roots.

"Fiona," Jake sighed, and mentioned her to put her helmet on. She and Decks wore theirs so that they're conversations can be private as Fiona has her own frequency when she wants to talk privately, even in a room full of people. Their helmets assembled itself and they were now in a private conversation. The new helmets were made to save the users from needlessly putting in on and off. Madsen thought it was cool.

"Fiona, I know you've had a lot on your plate recently, so please, tell me what's on your mind?" Jake asked sincerely. Fiona had always had a thing for the leader, but she always felt nervous when talking to him, despite her tough exterior on the battlefield. Jake, on his part, wondered if she ever had feelings for him. Both were simply shy to admit it, but time clearly had moved on, and both knew that they needed to say something soon, like before they died or worse. For now, they were still trying to get through the current times and problems.

Fiona looking even more depressed than before. "It's just that, I

just wanted to see my mom and dad look up to their daughter and tells her that they are proud for everything I've done. Now, I don't even have a chance to say goodbye." She blinked back a tear. Jake knew how much she loved her parents, and to think that they died not knowing their daughter's fate was incomprehensible to describe. It had only occurred to her after she had time to reflect on her current predicament.

"Hey, tell you what, I can't speak for them, nor tell you that they're proud of you right now, but what matters is that you have friends here. So don't shut them out now. We're your family too. Besides, I might take you out for some dinner, what do you say?"

Fiona blinked, before she smiled. Trying to make her feel better and taking her out for dinner in one fell swoop. He wasn't beating around the bush that was for sure. But she had much more to deal with and while her CO was finally making his move, which she inwardly screamed in delight, she knew he was just doing this to make her feel good and forget her problems. She would accept, but just not now.

"I am grateful, sir. But I need to decline for now. Some things are best done alone." She replied back.

Jake was slightly disappointed, but he understood. One day though, they'll have their day soon, but for now, readjustment is the present issue for now.

{Glinn's Field, 1 hour later.}

The Pelicans touched down after some delays with Air Control. The Spartans touched down first, and then Halsey. 5 people waited for her in the landing strip, along with a small platoon guarding the area. Some Jedi were curious as to the new arrivals. The 3 involved in the landing party included Admiral Morrison, Commander Escandor, and CBMI Operative Lt. Joseph Roberts. They recognized those three, but the other two, they did not. In fact, they were cloaked so even their faces are blocked due to the darkness the cloak provided, but it did not hide their feminine figures, identifying them as female. Halsey narrowed her eyes on the two as Morrison came to greet her. He warmly held out his hand, to which she shook it.

"Welcome to Andromeda, Catherine Halsey. I do believe some introductions are in order?" He inquired.

"You already read my file, Admiral. I see no need to dawdle here saying hello." She quipped.

Morrison held his hands up, but his demeanor was still friendly and warm. "Woah, there. I'm not here to make enemies, Doctor. I'm just here to make nice, that's all. I don't want any unwanted hostilities at the start."

Dr. Halsey shook that off. "No offense, Admiral, but that's how most people who used me start to greet me with. Years and years of being a puppet for ONI made me very wary of any "friends" I meet in both the UNSC and its intelligence branches." She then glanced over to Commander Escandor, who greeted her with a smile.

"Nice to finally meet you ma'am." His boyish smile was slightly

infectious as some of the Spartans actually smiled back before they realized what they were doing and controlled themselves. This gesture did not escape Halsey's notice, however.

"And you as well, Commander. I've heard a lot of good things from you." Halsey commented. Lance tilted his head. "Does that include the things covered in black ink?"

"Especially the black ink." Halsey stressed the first word. She moved closer to the Spartan, who had to bend over just to listen in, as Halsey whispered to him. "I've been told you can help them. Can you?" She was clearly mentioning her Spartans, who were shifting left and right in their posture, uncomfortable with the way Halsey was talking about them. But Morrison decided to talk to them so they had to entertain the Admiral as Lance spoke with Halsey in private.

"I've also been told that you got some of my IIs to integrate into society without fault. Is that true?" Halsey asked under her breath. Lance looked at her. "I think you must be exaggerating the without fault part. I was able to get them to live normally, but they seem driven for battle, so I transferred them under my unit, as we have seen the worst combat in the frontlines from our perspectives. I did have help though. Do you intend to pitch in?" Lance asked her.

The Doctor did not hesitate giving her answer. "If there is a chance I can give them a life again, outside of a warzone, then I'm all in for it."

Lance still shook his head. "We still have to get your Spartans onboard though. I don't intend to force them into anything. The II's under me did it because they wanted out, since they seem to be intent of getting a life outside ripping a Sangheili in half." Lance said the last part in sarcasm, but it was mostly sincere.

Dr. Halsey nodded. "I will have to arrange that at some other time. But for now, can you show me where the information terminals that detail this galaxy are?" Lance nodded. Despite CBMI debriefings, Halsey wanted a more colorful, and detailed look at the galaxy she lived in, and led on inside the base, as the rest of the Spartans followed suit.

All of the guests looked around and saw humans and aliens alike talking to each other like they were of the same race. Halsey was intrigued, the IIs were a bit uncomfortable and the IVs were mixed in reaction.

"This feels rather weird." Linda-058, sniper of Blue Team, commented, as Adrianna-111 of Grey Team spoke up in reply. "Feeling's mutual." She said as a young Mirilian Padawan gawked up at the Spartan, who simply waved her hands as if to say hello.

Many Knights and Masters of different races, but mostly Human, looked at the group with curiosity as they passed through. The Spartans felt like they were under a microscope, but Halsey took this as a good sign.

Just as curious as they are about them, she is curious about the Jedi as well. Her stay in the Andromeda is going to be a very interesting one at that.

{Glinn's Field Data Storage and Library, 10 minutes later.}

"Here we are, Ladies and Gentlemen. This isn't exactly the Absolute Record, but it will suffice for your needs." Lance said upon entering the Library.

"Thank you." Halsey thanked Lance before she sauntered off. Lance then went over to Master Chief and held his hand out. Clearly, even if they were Spartans, Master Chief is clearly taller than he is, along with the other Spartan IIs. "Nice to finally meet a legend made flesh." Master Chief simply took the hand and shook it.

"The honor is mine, sir." He replied. Lance simply shook his head. "No offense, but you are a legend around here. If anything, I should call you sir, and not the other way around." Lance grinned. Master Chief noted that while the IVs were known to be more like marines and ODSs in their mannerisms and gestures, Lance acted like some tourist on a vacation, as his posture and stature was rather too relaxed. If anything, they thought "How did this slacker get a Commander position?" But John, Fred and Jai noticed that his posture, while lazy, had a coil in the way it was positioned, like a predator before pouncing on an unsuspecting prey.

They realized he was putting up a lazy façade to deceive and fool. It almost worked, but the thing that gave Lance away was his eyes. They seemed jolly, but it still carried a small hint of steel, and his body movements gave some of it away.

Spartans are never known to be great talkers, but body movement is their specialty, and it nearly fooled the best. Nearly.

John pointed that out, to which Lance smiled. "It's my "vacation", which is to say that I just have to lay back and relax for a bit before moving out."

John frowns a bit. "That sounds rather lazy."

Lance shrugs in response. "The Spartans get a little room to relax, since we haven't seen a lot of combat lately. Besides, there were a lot of Spartans since Doisac and until today, we haven't had a lot of combat lately, so brass decided to let us be and relax a bit. Also, since we are not the best of buds with the Empire, we will have to be called in soon, so, we are gonna soak up some relaxation before we go out there. Get my drift?" Lance raised his eyebrows. "Besides, my idea of a vacation includes helping out people and resting up, so I won't complain. And before you bitch about us not getting a lot of practice, then the cryo sleep clearly has not left your system."

Master Chief was slightly peeved, but held it in check. Kelly had a question for him and Lance began answering them, along with the others who had similar questions.

{Meanwhile, with Dr. Halsey}

Catherine was still busy looking over data crystals that the Jedi were using and was looking into their contents. It was very interesting and intriguing, to find out about the Andromeda, its people, and most especially, the Jedi.

Their powers basically were telekinesis, Mind-reading, mind-controlling, empathy, and even flat-out electro-kinesis all bundled into one. She also studied up on their doctrines, roles in the Republic, and more. But the one thing that disturbed her was how they recruited.

Basically, it would mean nothing short of tearing a young newborn away from their families when they are identified, far younger than her "conscription" of the children for the Spartan II project. Still, the similarities were very unnerving and disturbed her that while she had done it once, they have done it multiple times, and throughout the centuries that the Order stood. It baffled her why the galaxy just let them get away with what is essentially child kidnapping.

As she was so engrossed with her studies, she did not notice a small, yet old and wizened green Jedi approach her from behind.

"Very strange, for you to be here." He said, startling Halsey from her thoughts and she faced the small, and peculiar creature before her. He was green, had pointy ears and was no taller than a Covenant Unggoy. He wore robes that the doctor recognized as Jedi.

"Beg your pardon?" Halsey asked in a brash manner.

"Locked, the door leading to this place, it was. Strange, for you to gain access without our codes." The green Jedi Master responded.

"Your security is based on UNSC firmware, which I hacked because I could not rely on piecemeal information given to me by the UNSC, seeing as they don't trust me well enough to learn everything. Besides, I was under the assumption that the UNSC owned this base." True, despite Escandor's and Morrison's hospitality, some high brass UNSC officials decided she should be left to fend for herself in the dark, in case she had some ulterior motive.

The green little alien was chuckling a bit. "Not all of it, doctor. Your name, if you could give?"

"Dr. Catherine Halsey." She held her hand up in response.

"Yoda, my name is." He took it in response. Yoda had heard much about the Doctor already, but he decided it would be best to ask her himself. As he did so, Mace Windu, Obi-Wan and Anakin Skywalker have returned from their trip to find a perfect place to rebuild their temple. "Master Yoda." Mace said, earning Yoda's attention.

"We have found a good place to lay down the foundations. Construction will begin tomorrow, as scheduled." Obi-Wan reported, just as Luminara Unduli, Aayla Secura, Kit Fisto and Shaak-Ti entered the room to greet the wizened old Master. Halsey took note. "My, my, you seem to be a much more prominent person here than I thought." Her words garnered the Jedi's attention, as more Masters came in, including the well-known and wizened Master Fay.

The attack almost killed off the majority of the Council, so they had to add Master Fay as well; a centuries old near-human Jedi Master whose vast experience and power with the Force practically granted her the seat. Her face was regal, almost royalty, and her appearance is "ageless and striking" in the words of Qui-Gon Jinn, who met her

in his time as a Knight. Fay had pale skin, blond hair, and had pointy ears similar to a Sephi, with tattoos on her left cheek and forehead. And has been known to end conflicts by simply being on the planet she stepped foot on. Though nomadic in nature, she had to stay, for her fellow Jedi. She now regards both CBMI agents with curiosity. And she also never carried a lightsaber, as her powers and Force wielding prowess made up for it.

She survived her encounter with Ventress during Kenobi's mission to Queyta when he had to find an antidote for a Seperatist bio-weapon known as swamp gas. She nearly died when Ventress stabbed her in the back, but due to her long and powerful connection to the Force, she survived, even after using her last reserves of strength to save Obi-Wan, which was also gravely injured at the time. She survived but was in a coma during the time she was out. When she awoke, the Seperatists had a coup and was picked up by Seperatists that was now under the leadership of Mina Bonterri, while she visited the planet to shut down the remaining chemical labs in the planet. She was scheduled to head to Coruscant after recovering fully, but the attack on the Temple occurred and was transported instead, to Worth.

She had many questions to the Order, but her most prominent one was their change in policy about relationships and attachments, one she found rather pleasant, but slightly annoying, as she had to fend off 3 attempts by the Marines flirting with her. She had been amused, but she wasn't looking for any significant other yet. As of right now, though, she is only concerned with saving and helping her fellow Jedi.

"I'm sorry, and you are?" Anakin Skywalker asked politely. Dr. Halsey introduced herself, which got the Jedi to look at her with interest. "Are you by chance, the same person who developed the Spartan project?" Shaak-Ti asked. Amazed that the UNSC would divulge such information, she then moved on to entertain them.

"Well, the project was already in motion by the time I was recruited them in. I simply made the process better." She admitted. Anakin was rather concerned, because he had studied on that topic. True, she improved it, albeit at a cost that sickened him: the lives of children who she had stolen from their families.

"Better? Last I heard, you kidnapped children, against their will. How do you justify that as better?" Anakin may have better control of his emotions than before, but he still had moments of emotional outburst.

"Children are more susceptible to indoctrination, meaning they were very loyal to the UNSC, with no fear of betrayal or deception from them, and the augmentations would be more easier to install than adults." She said nonchalantly.

"Those were children!" Aayla suddenly lashed out. "They were still too young, and even though your plan was good in paper, when it came to actual practice, not all of them survived!" Halsey had to commend on them doing their homework, that's for sure.

Halsey simply scoffed her away, realizing that her conversation now became a debate on morality. "When faced with extinction, all alternatives are better than the probability that we as a species will be wiped out. When the Covenant invaded, my Spartans stood

between them and us."

Kit Fisto shook his head as he added his voice to the argument. "You originally created them to fight HUMAN INSURRECTIONISTS, your own kind. Don't bend history to your will, Dr. Halsey." Master Fisto sternly said, as Rahm Kota, Ki Adi-Mundi, and Stass Allie entered as well.

"Well, then," Said Halsey as she addressed Fisto. "I'm sure that while you debate on my moral standing, it seems rather foolish to call me evil when your own practices make you no less holier than I."

"I beg your pardon?" Shaak-Ti asked with a hint of heat in the voice.

"I'm not the only one who's studied here, Togrutan." Catherine addressed Shaak-Ti's species to prove that point. "Your own recruitment practices are also subject to moments of grey morality. You take these children, newborns, or infants away from their parents, never to be seen or loved again, and take them to the Jedi Temple to be made as "peacekeepers." If that's not indoctrination, I don't know what is?"

"And you th-" Mace Windu was cut off by Catherine holding her hand up to his face. "I was not done yet. The real kicker, though, is when the Jedi _cut off_ all feelings for fear of hate and anger to seep into you, and bring you closer to the _Dark Side._ While I admit, that is a pretty valid reason, had you not considered the possibility that they may have fallen due to peer pressure?" Halsey asked, earning both curiosity and outrage in equal doses.

"What are you trying to say here?" Obi-Wan asked diligently, as Halsey turned her head to him. "I'm saying, is that they could be judged, cast-off, persecuted, all for the sake of simply getting angry, or falling in love. And your Code suggests that emotions are to blame for that. Personally, I find that rather humorous." Halsey was starting to realize that her tirade had gathered a large crowd of both Jedi and UNSC personnel listening in on the tirade of Dr. Halsey.

"You find that funny?" Despite that verbal barb, the Masters had a cool head on them.

"Yes, because when you think about it, the Code was made based out of an experience that _scared _the Jedi then. You changed it when one of you," She pointed at Skywalker. "Turned that Code upside down and got the rest to follow suit."

Well, most had to admit, they did find the new changes rather liberating, but Halsey's condescending tone was making it hard for most of them to swallow it. "And to top it off, your enemies, the so-called "Sith" had used that same Code and nearly brought the Order down upon its head. In short, the plan worked initially, but cost you in the long run, because he wanted to manipulate you all from the start, following Palpatine like a pet dog following his Master, not knowing that same master plans to gun him down from the start. Your lack of emotions made it much harder for you to emphasize and relate to the people, all the while making you more and more vulnerable, and more hated as many citizens got caught up in the fires of war, making

it even harder to gain allies as a result. And now, here you are, at the predicament you got caught up in." Halsey took a deep breath after that. And the whole room was filled with arguments and debates about the whole thing.

Just as Mace Windu was about to give a retort, Master Yoda tapped his cane and all fell silent. "Enough. Much debate, this topic has created. But much changed, that remains true."

"But Master-" Stass Allie argued but was cut off when Yoda tapped his cane again and held his hand up to halt her tirade. He then looked to Dr. Halsey, and spoke to her in a sage-like manner. "Catherine Halsey. Many things said about our Order, stings us still. But truth is never an easy concept to swallow. Our Order brought down by our own Code, shameful. For the Republic, our motto was. But now, the galaxy is clouded, poisoned, choked by the Shadow of the Dark Side. And its citizens, hate us still. Our course of action, what do you think?" He asked sincerely.

There was an old saying, in a dead language of our people. "Ut redimeret eam tibi, Sceleribus parce noscendae sunt." It means, "To forgive thyself, one must first learn to forgive the transgressions of others." Fitting, considering how many people hate us both." She gestured to the Jedi and herself. "As much as I hate to admit it, we are both reviled in our societies, a trait we both share since we arrived here in Worth, don't you think?" She asked.

"The UNSC took us in!" Ahsoka Tano was in the room for about 10 minutes, but heard enough to make herself acquainted with the topic at hand.

"But for the rest of the galaxy? While it is true that Palpatine was to blame for everything, who was the one following him in the first place? True you did not know then, but when the truth came, who abandoned the galaxy to him?" She asked dubiously.

"We won't always stay away. One day we will return." Anakin said with confidence and firm conviction that most Jedi could follow to, but for now, the rest simply nodded their head slightly. Since his confession, most Jedi avoided him like the plague, save for a few Jedi and his closest friends and family. Halsey nodded. "I have no doubt that you will, young man." She said.

"Yes, they will." A feminine voice rang out from amidst the Jedi. The crowd parted and two cloaked figures stepped to the Jedi Masters and the UNSC doctor, and lowered their hoods to reveal none other than Barriss Offee and Asajj Ventress, which one half of the crowd gasped in shock, and the other half began to ignite lightsabers and all pointed them at the latter. Asajj simply ignored their open hostility and stood beside her partner. The Masters stood alert, but Yoda and Dr. Halsey were less confrontational in their demeanor.

"What are you doing here?" Mace Windu asked the two, but clearly the message was more focused on Asajj.

"Master," Anakin regained his senses for him and whispered silently. "Barriss explained to me that she would tell us, but only with her partner in tow, and they are here to give you that explanation."

She nodded, before she turned to Dr. Halsey, and addressed her. "Dr.

Catherine Halsey. My name is Barriss Offee and this is my partner, Asajj Ventress. We are agents from the Central Bureau of Military Intelligence and we are here to be your guide during your stay here until I hear otherwise from my superiors." She answered in a professional manner.

Many Jedi, especially her old Master Luminara Unduli, was shocked at how military she was. Not only was she alive, but she was now with the Terrans. The only ones not surprised were Anakin, who knew before hand, and Master Yoda, whom Anakin told about after his encounter with Lance.

Master Fay only had curiosity on her when she saw Asajj and Barriss, but found Dr. Halsey's actions rather appalling, no matter the justification behind it.

As for Asajj, she was surprisingly forgiving, but she still wanted to hear the truth. "I am here to explain myself, as I have told Master Skywalker about a week ago. Is it possible to do so now?" She asked, and the Masters noticed the large crowd looking at the two with curiosity and concern. Who wouldn't be when a former Jedi and Sith Assassin show up as partners?

Master Yoda looked to his associate Master Windu and the Jedi Master began to scatter the crowds, much to their dismay as they too wanted to know, but had to hold their tongue for now. They would learn the truth later. Everyone left except for the Masters and Ahsoka, as Barriss requested her friends' presence when she gave her explanation. Ahsoka smiled widely at the gesture. At least her stay with the Terrans did not let her lose sight of her friends.

Everyone, even Dr. Halsey, went to one of the conference rooms and once privacy was assured, she began to share what she had shared to Anakin 7 days ago

{30 minutes into the discussion}

By now, Barriss had basically finished her personal story on how she came to lose faith in the Order, and how she came to approach the UNSC. Many were shocked, especially her old Master and her best friend, who came to her side and hugged her, even as Luminara's stoic look broke into a teary eyed sob on Barriss' shoulder. The rest of the Masters simply bowed their heads. Truly the real reverberations of the Clone Wars had begun to ram into the Jedi hard.

Even with the changes the Jedi made, Barriss realized that it was not fruitful to stay with them any longer, as her trust with the Jedi had run out, and is still unwilling to trust the Jedi Order again, despite the changes. Besides, after working for the CBMI for months now, she knows that they can do more change and more good than the Jedi could ever do. Because as they directly resolve problems of the galaxy directly, the CBMI change it from the shadows, bringing more progress than the Jedi and can make the galaxy believe that the problem solved itself.

The problem with the Jedi that she noted when working with the CBMI is because of their status, it is almost impossible to quietly solve a problem, while still acting under jurisdiction, whereas the CBMI are near anonymous with no close ties, aside from the CIS, that

allows them to act with a freedom not seen when she was with the Jedi.

As for the matter of Asajj, she was approached by the CBMI about one month after her defection from the CIS under Dooku. She had been offered with a big fat paycheck that allows her to live comfortably and still allowing her the ability to use her "unique" talents to solve problems that are deemed too "ethical" for the CBMI and UNSC to do. She accepted wholeheartedly, and with another condition she requested upon joining the CBMI: Savage Oppress.

The Zabrak had been an ally for Asajj for awhile, before betraying her and almost ending her life. She intended to pay him back in full and she knew full well that the Terrans had the capacity to aid her in that regard. As to their partnership, it had been rocky for about a week, until a black ops mission deep in CIS space almost got them killed and relied on each other to help the other get out of that sticky situation. Long story short, they shared experiences that led a mutual trust and friendship with each other, former Jedi and former Sith.

Many masters, even the old and wizened Yoda, sometimes complained about their situation, but Barriss gave them a perspective from the UNSC side. They only saw two neighbors living next door trying to gun the other down, with disregard for the people caught in the crossfire, with the UNSC as the person across the street looking on, seeing the true extent of the damage done by both sides. The Jedi argued, but Fay, Obi-Wan and Shaak-Ti saw truth in her words. While it was true the Dark Side needed to be defeated, they disregarded who may be hurt, intentional or not. It was in the nature of war, and the War between the Light and the Dark Side of the Force always had caught many in its midst, willing or not. The UNSC is more grey, however. Not as menacing as the Dark Side, but still willing to do what it takes to stop a war, no matter how distasteful the method used to stopping it. Master Fay blanched a bit due to her more pacifistic views, but held her peace, as she was impassive all throughout, though the other masters had a hard time keeping their composure, in light of how the UNSC sees their struggles. But Ahsoka almost blew her lekku off trying to defend the Jedi, but failed as Barriss countered her swiftly with every argument she made. Ahsoka was downcast at first, but Barriss was supporting the Jedi still, even if they did do mistakes. She would, however, aid them in the shadows. Ahsoka slightly smiled at her friend for her support, but it still hurt her that she would turn her back on the Jedi like that. Master Yoda had a few choice words for that as well.

"Careful, you must be." Master Yoda warned. "The lure of the Dark Side, strong in such dark roads."

"Do not worry yourself." Barriss reassured. "I have seen what the Dark Side holds for me, and while the power is, intoxicating, I find no reason to just wade in. But that does not mean I won't play fair."

"A Dangerous Sentiment, if you ask me." Mace Windu said grimly. Barriss simply looked at him and said:

"Well, you know what most Terran spies say: The Future is written in Black Ink."

"And what does that mean?" Luminara asked in curiosity. Asajj answered for her partner.

"It's classified." Asajj smirked. And that ended that particular conversation.

They then began to detail their arrival and subsequent training, in firearms and vehicles and AI maintenance, and basic information gathering and advanced teachings in the art of using a UNSC ship and protocol. But more importantly, they trained with new and unfamiliar weapons such as the Plasma Sword and the prototype WarFrame, which has been in testing out for weaknesses and pushing the limits of the weapon. They trained in Fort Ragno, with a Sangheili Ultra and a Spartan IV as their trainers. They learned, and soon became formidable opponents in the use of the UNSC and Elite Weaponry.

Soon afterwards, they detailed rather classified information, including the deal with Kal Skirata on retaking Mandalore, with the two of them called onto the field to deal with the Sith who rule their while Lance and his group help out the Mandalorians, not mentioning their other objective aside from their own.

Naturally, everyone, especially her best friend, argued loudly. "Are you mad?" Ahsoka exploded, grabbing her friend's shoulder and shaking them, though Barriss was rather amused and touched that her friend would still be worried for her safety, even after all that she had said.

Obi-Wan had to object, as did everyone else, while Rahm Kota seemed rather interested, and Master Fay, while concerned for their well being, held her peace. The two agents stayed silent as they voiced their concerns, until a very loud whistle got them all to, miraculously, shut up. They all turned to Dr. Halsey, who had two fingers in her mouth and began to speak for the two.

"Alright, enough, I can barely hear myself think. I know most of you have at least one concern going into this, but can you at least give them the chance to speak their thoughts for this?" Halsey asked. "I may be new to this, but I still know the difference when to make a point and when to shut up." Most masters looked indignant, although some of the more elder Jedi had a moment of mirth when she told all of them to stop talking and allow the two to speak their minds out.

Barriss nodded in gratitude to Halsey before she began. "Masters of the Jedi Council, while most of you have very valid reasons to fret over my position with the Terrans, and not to mention my assignment to capture or kill the Sith in charge, I am not that meek child of a healer you knew me before." She proclaimed in a cold tone, one that shook her closest friends and mentors to the core. "I have seen the Dark Side, and have seen the side covered with Black Ink, so between you and me, nothing no longer scares me more, than what I am capable of doing." Her voice carried steel and fire, two things that cannot be described in tandem with the normally meek Jedi. But Asajj decided that a little video presentation was in order.

"Well if you don't believe us, allow us to demonstrate who we trained with and fight alongside with during that timeâ€¦"

She tapped a few commands and suddenly the room went dark except for

the Holotable, which then began to project an image, and two figures are visible, one was clearly a Jedi, with her robes and in a Soresu stance, and the other was an armored figure with two large blades wielded as though they were knives, and only Master Rahm Kota recognized the image.

It was that sparring match between Master Mavra Zane and Captain Lheanna "Lady" Solis

Secondary Story: And the Melody of the Blade.

{Simulation Room A, Glinn's Field, 1 week ago}

(Cue Metal Gear Rising: Stains of Time OST. Listen to this while reading this.)

Lady and Mavra charged with wild abandon as they thrust their blades together as the arena changed into something that resembles a Roman Coliseum, complete with a gladiatorial pit that the women used as the arena. Neither woman cared, because they were dead set on taking the other out. Mavra pulled a pillar from the adjacent podium and hurled it at her opponent, who ducked underneath to flying pillar and sliced it silly before standing up as the Pillar now became useless, smoking piles of artificial stone. Their blades collided once again, spark flying from the impact.

The Many of the Jedi found the weapons the Spartan used curious. It looked like a bladed weapon, but upon closer inspection, it was actually an energy weapon capable of shaping itself into any weapon that resembled whatever bladed form the person can think of, as the weapon is linked to the Neural Lace, at least, that was how the Spartans told them. However, it was relatively new and unstable, as it cannot form any ranged weapons to speak of, only melee based weapons was the normal limitation.

They called it the "Type 45 Multi-Formed Energy Displacement Blade" or as some Spartans called it, the "WarFrame." It lived up to its name as Mavra dodged Lady's WarFrame slash and jabs, but only barely as scorch marks on her robes and burns started to appear on the battered Master's form.

It was intense, as weapon racks and vehicles littered the area, posing different opportunities for both women to take advantage of. For Lady, she took a heavy weapon from the Warthog, a gauss gun, and began shooting at Mavra who took cover while she began to use the Force to move many large objects and weapons and threw them at the Spartan. Lady got out just before several highly explosive munitions flew to the Warthog and caused an explosion that decimated the Warthog. Lady got out and unsheathed her blades and fearlessly charged through the debris. Only to charge right into Mavra's Blades. Although her Spartan senses were sharp, Mavra utilized her skills with the Lightsaber, with her reflexes already enhanced by the Force, dodged one of Lady's strikes, and jabbed her Lightsaber through the Spartan. The Spartans who cheered went silent as the Jedi reluctantly clapped at Mavra's win. The body fell like a sack of potatoes and Mavra withdrew her blade, looking rather unnerved.

Even with all the Terran's assurances of their safety, seeing a Spartan "die" like that was unnerving to say the least. They looked over to their Spartan counterparts, who seemed to be handing money

over and shaking their heads. The Jedi looked rather shocked. But even more so when the arena was suddenly engulfed in white light and then the arena changed, this time it looked like a launch bay, complete with UNSC Vampires and Katanas parked to the left. Mavra blinked and saw Lady on the opposite side, her helmet unequipped, allowing her to see Lady's rather pleased look.

"Not bad, I'm impressed with that skill and ingenuity. I'll be sure to take note." Lady remarked with a hint of respect in her voice.

"Thank you." Was Mavra's reply, before she took her lightsaber out. "But we are not done yet." She grinned, but she saw the Spartan's helmet reattach itself and before it covered her face, Mavra swore she saw a grin on her face

Mavra suddenly had a bad feeling, as if she wasâ€¦

Before she finished her thought, the bell rang and Lady sprinted. Mavra was shocked and was caught off guard as Lady took off in speeds that only associated with the most experienced of Jedi Masters.

So that's her game. Mavra thought grimly as she blocked her opponent's weapons. _She was only testing me, and now was going all out. I am going to need more than my skills to win this._

Lady used the first match to gauge her opponent's fighting abilities. And so far, she was impressed, but now she had to bring it on to her. She briefly saw her fellow Spartans looking rather disappointed. She also used that first round to disappoint her Spartans in their betting. After all, it wasn't fair to call Mavra "Lost Cause," when she is yet to gauge her fighting capacity when pushed.

Mavra was now on the offense, until a small flash of light blinded her for a moment before recovering, barely parrying Lady's savage strikes from her energy machetes. She then dropped them and began to go hand-to-hand, knocking her lightsaber and literally punching Mavra faster than normal before she roundhouse kicked Mavra to the energy barrier, with some of her blood staining the wall.

Many of her students cried out when Mavra's head bashed against the energy wall hard, spitting out some blood as Lady struck violently and without mercy breaking her arms and eliciting a scream of pain before grabbing her head and twisting it with such ferocity that the body flew into the air and painted a nearby Vampire crimson red.

The students were in an uproar and began to unclip their lightsabers when the arena changed again. This time though, the setting was now in some ancient ruins, complete with cob webs, decrepit structures and dark corridors. And in the middle, were both Master and Spartan, with the former looking rather queasy. And Lady noticed the signs.

Most people, excluding Spartans, had a difficult time adjusting in a simulation room, and when they died and respawned for the first time, they had symptoms of sea-sickness or nausea, so usually simulation rooms were only for elite ODSTs, veteran Marine troops, or rookie Spartans in War Games. Simply put, this was Mavra's first time.

And she did not take it well. Many of Jedi students did one of two

things; faint or gawk. When they recovered, as did Mavra, they took their seats rather hesitantly. Lady went over and sheathed her blades as she checked on Mavra. She recoiled at the touch. "You alright? First times dying in the simulations always suck the worst, but you'll get used to it." She said, patting the Master's back gently.

"Thank you." Mavra barely said before she heaved her breakfast on the tarp before she recovered from the sickness. She was given a Terran energy drink before she continued on. It was good enough to get her back to her pre-sick state.

"I am thankful, but I still intend to win this." Mavra said, going into her ready stance. Most Masters would say that such arrogance could lead her to the Dark Side, but Mavra needed her head to be clear of the war and death she had witnessed for 3 years, and this is the best way to get the stress out. Lady grinned, her confidence brimming full as she reconstructed her helmet back on.

"Don't say that one just yet." Lady replied, bringing her blades to bear, and with that, they began anew.

{AN: Cue Metal Gear Rising OST I'm my Own Master Now.}

They began to attack immediately, almost disregarding caution in the wind. They barely knew each other, but when they clashed again and again, they began to understand bit by bit on who the other opponent was, but it did not matter now. This was a sparring match, yet they treated it as if it was a life-or-death duel.

Mavra Force pushed Lady away and grabbed a chunk of the scenery and hurled it at Lady, who promptly sliced it, like before. But as Lady recovered, Mavra savagely brought her blade down and went with a feint before taking the fight to Lady. Lady had to comment Mavra, she was extremely ferocious when the situation called for it. She needed some breathing room, so she used the Pulse grenade on her hip and threw it at Mavra, who caught and threw it away as it digitized and vaporized the scenery. Mavra noticed more grenades and equipment on her belt and realized that this was the Spartan's semi-answer to her mastery of the Force.

Fine, let's try something new. Mavra thought as she began to get to higher ground, with Lady in hot pursuit. Mavra knew that this was a long shot, but if it worked, it will give her a good advantage. She used the Force to enhance her speed and agility as she deftly worked her way up the arena. For a simulation, it does its best to up the ante.

As soon as she reached the peak, she was that the area was littered with debris. Perfect.

As Lady began to climb up, she had to prep some grenades and a few mines if the Master was planning to back out of her plan, and knew of her abilities. She knew she might find something in the upper levels that would give her an advantage in the spar, so she opted a different route, as she finished placing hidden mines and explosives in the nooks and crannies of which the Master come up on. She shimmied up and down to find another opening into the area where the Jedi was last seen going into. She peered over from the ledge and smiled inwardly.

She saw about a few dozen artificial stone pillars, levitating off the ground and facing to the direction of where the Spartan was supposed to appear, going after her target. Lady then noticed something peculiar: If there was another entrance here, why didn't she cover that too?

Her answer came as a large levitating pillar of rock came at her from the right. She was knocked straight through the wall and was free-falling back to the lower levels, where she crashed through 2 pillars before a large stone wall stopped her and she crashed into the ground, breaking a few ribs in her body and depleting her shields and denting the armor. Lady cursed at underestimating the Jedi again. She needed to stop doing that.

Mavra smiled. Her tactic was simple, yet very effective. Her smile then became a growl as she leapt up and brought her blade to bear on the Spartan, who successfully blocked the blow, despite the injuries and pain. Mavra hoped it would do the job, but the Spartans were tougher than realized, so she had to add more strength in her attacks. She was so focused that she did not notice the Spartan's other hand holding a plasma grenade on the side, hidden by the rubble that blocked her line of sight, as she only saw only half of the Spartan.

Lady had to time this just right, or her next defeat will be surely determined. She waited until the very last second until she brought her hand with the plasma grenade, priming it, and, despite trying to dodge out of the way, stuck to her left cheek.

She flailed as the grenade began brighter until it detonated in a blue flash, with nearly 3/4ths of her face missing and fell to the ground, near headless. Many Jedi winced heartily as they cringed and worried slightly for their fellow Master and Mentor.

The Arena changed again, in a skyscraper like environment, with a blue sky and a sun glaring down on the two combatants. Mavra recovered swiftly, but had a terrible headache and took a break for at least 2 minutes before she got ready again. For some reason, the Spartans began to produce popcorn out of nowhere. Initially refusing, the Jedi reluctantly asked for some refreshments as the battles take long or a bit stressful to watch thirsty.

"Impressive tactic." Lady remarked slightly. Mavra nodded in response. "Well, not all of us are as durable as you are." Despite her recent defeat, Mavra took it pretty well. But she was not intending to go down today.

Lady however, took note of a Falcon transport behind her and had an idea. She charged at Mavra, who as expected, dodged to the right, but then used a grapple function on her right gauntlet and aimed it at her lightsaber arm, and aimed for the Falcon and fired, latching the Jedi and the simulation vehicle, and used her momentum to push the Falcon off the ledge, bringing the Jedi with it. Mavra shrieked as she found her arm getting dislocated and pulled by the light UNSC transport. She used the Force to call her lightsaber on the other side and cut the cable, spinning to her feet and using the momentum to deliver a savage blow to the Spartan, cutting her helmet and disabling it, forcing Lady to discard it. The Sparks that came from the wiring slightly hit her face, blinding her momentarily and

allowing Mavra, despite her broken arm, to attack

Despite her disability, Mavra pushed for the offensive with her one good arm, forcing the Spartan away due to her disorientation of her helmet. The adrenaline forcing the pain down and allowing Mavra to strike ferociously and battering at her defenses, until the Spartans footing betrayed Lady and allowed Mavra to cleave her blade downwards, bisecting the Spartan, with Lady's face a state of shock, and slight amusement as one half fell on the ground, the other fell off the roof.

2-2 now. Score was even. The arena shifted for the last time, now settling on a plain Green field of grass, the wind playing the grass into a melody, the sun shining down on them, and the nature of the arena was deceptively calm. Lady and Mavra now stood alone, silent, finally beginning to see that only one of them would be triumphant.

Lady took her helmet off, deciding that this battle needed a more personal feel, and Mavra took her buns and loosened them, revealing that her hair is at shoulder length, and signifying that she intends to take this to the next level.

No words needed to be said, this was the last match.

The crowd was silent, anticipation for what is to come permeating the atmosphere.

{**Cue Metal Gear Rising OST: It has to be This Way**}

The two then charged and soon after they collided, sparks and electric cackling were the only sounds apart from their breathing in the whole arena. They were both silent. It was eerie, to say the least. But they are not done yet. They hacked, they slashed, Mavra used the Force push to gain ground, while Lady used her remaining grenades and hardlight shield to hold the line against her powers. This was now a fair fight, no other advantages or disadvantages that both combatants could take advantage of. This was now, a battle between their skills and gadgets.

Lady realized she was starting to run out of grenades, with only the pulse grenades the most abundant right now. She decided to up the ante, and knocked Mavra back as she morphed her blades into one, double edged blade, similar to what European Medieval Knights used, and operated her hardlight shield as much more smaller form, yet more durable and lightweight. Mavra saw this and grabbed her other yellow lightsaber in a reverse hand grip the left hand and her primary blade in the right hand.

They then charged yet again, with Mavra pushed back as the Spartan put her strength in that charge. Mavra decided to go the offensive, using her right hand blade to feint, with the left striking upwards, the shield buckled a bit before Lady decided to ram the thing in Mavra's nose, breaking it. Her gesture was returned in kind when Mavra feinted a left slash, and used the hilt to bash Lady's face in with it, causing a small cut above her forehead, as another bash created a black eye in her left eye, before Lady pushed her off and used her suit's slip-space ability to teleport away from her. She did not use it because she thought it would be unfair but now she would need to equalize the battlefield with that little party trick.

The battle was ten minutes long, with both combatants becoming weary and their wounds apparent, even the Spartan MJOLNIR armor was becoming scrap metal with the continuous hits from Mavra's lightsaber, and the Jedi's robe was getting ripped up from the energy weapon that Lady wielded.

By now, both combatants were exhausted, but the Spartan still had a lot of fuel left, despite the fatigue, and began to push. Slowly, her augmentations were beginning to help pan the battle in her favor, as Mavra, for all her mastery in the Force, could not muster more strength as she is pushed back. Her defense, while still solid, was starting to falter. This was what Lady was hoping for, as she was meant to endure long battles like this. And the end was now in sight.

It did not take long.

Mavra tried to go on the offensive, but her muscles screamed rest, and her lightsaber was suddenly knocked out of her hands and in that same movement, Lady sliced her chest in half. Lady saw the stunned look in Mavra's eyes before collapsing, her upper half falling forward, the lower part fell backward.

It was over.

The energy dome dissipated, and immediately, Mavra was swarmed by her former students, clamoring if she was alright. She was dizzy, the whole experience was rather confusing, but a hand was offered to her by Lady, and accepted it as she was helped up.

"Very impressive, Jedi." Lady commented.

Mavra shook her hand. No harm done, apparently. "Same to you, Spartan. I look forward to the day we work together on the field." Mavra claimed.

The two shook hands, and all sides were now in open discussion, with numerous Knights now beginning their sparring with the Spartans as they had their own matches now. Lady and Mavra headed for the showers.

{Conference Room 2A}

The video ended there, with most of the Jedi present silent and contemplating the scene for a few moments before Barriss spoke up. "As you can see, my associates can handle themselves, and I trained alongside such warriors, so do not underestimate my abilities as the galaxy has come to underestimate the Terrans." She said. Many Jedi had to think this over, but Yoda spoke up in behalf of all of them.

"Formidable, your ne allies are, Barriss. Fear, I do for your involvement with the Terrans. But, if trusted, then in your hands, the Sith on Mandalore will be." Yoda said.

"Thank you, now, since you understand, I believe you might want to follow me for our briefing rooms." She said, and sauntered off, with everyone coming with her in tow. Technically, their meeting was over, but since the CBMI agent insisted, they went with her.

Luminara went over to her friend's side and put her hand on her shoulder. "I am proud of you, despite of your recent changes. I will aid you in your endeavors, as long as they do not fall into a place where the Dark Side can take advantage." Luminara said, with Ahsoka saying something similar. Barriss smiled, knowing that she would have friends in the Jedi Order.

They came to a double door conference room, where Mandalorians and Clone Commanders were seated in a circular table and Generals were assembled, and Kal Skirata seated in the middle.

"Good that you have come, Jedi." Kal Skirata greeted the Jedi, much to their confusion.

"What is all this for?" Mace Windu asked the Mandalorian, who merely grinned.

"The UNSC helped us before, now they are paying us back, by helping us." Kal explained simply.

"And pray tell, what is it they are helping you with?" Stass Allie voiced her concern for the group. The doors closed behind and before the room became soundproof, Kal answered her question.

"Retaking Mandalore from the Sith."

**Now we head straight into the Mandalore arc, into the thick of it.
**

This entire operation will take over 3 days to complete. And will show off the more Star Wars-esque battles instead of the Halo-ish ones. Rest assured that the arc next after this will feature the UNSC Reach kicking ass. Hint: Characters from the Old Republic games like Satele Shan and Revan will appear, and you might be surprised how I bring them in. Working with NIGHTSTALKER to incorporate this little tidbit with the plans I have.

Also, congrats on those who picked Spartan, but I kept it interesting for the Jedi voters. Hope everyone is happy.

10. Episode 10

**First off, let me give you an update on Andirithir's status:
**

Hello Everyone,

HE'S AWAKE! Andirithir has finally woken up! I'm so sorry for not updating this, but things have been hectic. He's well onto the road of recovery, but he's still in and out because the Doctors want him to rest. His body needs to heal. Rest assured, the tests show that he has full cognitive capabilities.

~Sam,

**I thank God for his recovery, even though he is not Christian. Now, this will be broken up into a few parts. And I thank many people for sharing their criticisms for me. At the very least, I know where I

screwed up, no? I know this is old news, but I still want to mention this.**

**Anyways, I love your critiques and I enjoy seeing someone nit-pick around my wrong doings, because I know where I went wrong, and can improve as a result. Also, Nightstalker has been helping me improve this, so it took that long. Now, I know my updates have become slow, but note that I have been deferring to the author who started it all, so be aware that I am gonna take some time to update all this in some and all. **

Now this is split up evenly, between UNSC, Mandalorian, and CBMI route, with the two of 3 being black op in nature.

Episode 10: Operation Shadow Strike (UNSC)

{Mandalore, 1 week later}

"All Prowlers, Sound off."

"War, in position over target, waiting for green light."

"Death, all packages are ready, standing by."

"Pestilence, targets locked on and awaiting all go sign from High King."

"Famine here, Crossbow pods are now loaded and board is green, on standby."

"Silence running over the board. Lights are off and the mines are in place. Say the word."

"God Eye, tactical over watch now established, awaiting High King's Orders. All Prowlers are ready, and accounted for."

4 CBMI Prowlers, cloaked and hidden amongst the Deathwatch fleet that orbited the Mandalorian home planet, began to sound off.

3 months and 2 days ago, Kal Skirata had asked for UNSC and CBMI assistance in kicking the Deathwatch off the planet. While they could not commit much at the moment, they put the Spartans to work, since they are no longer in conflict and decided to send Lost Legion, Trinity Squad, and a few other squads over to the fleet, with 6 CBMI Stealth Prowlers, 2 of which are equipped with the Shadowspear Slip-space Drive, and due to the recent truce, was able to free up some UNSC Destroyers and Cruisers, even one Rock of Gibraltar Super Carrier, to help the newly founded Rogue Battalion retake Mandalore, and committed all of their forces to the fight, with Ne'tra Kad at the tip of the spear.

The Mandalorian Death Watch had been amassing fleets in secret since the start of the Clone Wars, using old derelict vessels and some new ones to help repel enemy attack. As much as 400 ships of all kinds were there to kick any invasion force to oblivion. While numbered at a near 600 ships, the size of two sector armies combined, Kal wanted to minimize casualties and sent in the UNSC prowlers to soften their targets, with the Prowlers' callsigns to be War, Death, Pestilence, Famine, Silence and God Eye, with the first 4 used to transport Lost Legion, a few Clone Commando squads and CBMI agents Barriss Offee,

and Asajj Ventress, and the last 2 are used for surveillance, Tactical Command Post and Support.

The designation "High King" goes to the Ne'tra Kad's flagship, Prosecutor, with Kal Skirata and Marik Mereel Orar as they coordinate the attack, with the UNSC awaiting his command and CBMI and their operatives ready to strike at a moment's notice.

While some Jedi had close relations to some Mandalorians and Clones, they reluctantly stayed behind in UNSC territory to aid the Jedi rebuild, but they were able to call every now and then. Mandalorian Shock Trooper Besk Vorp got off the holo comms as his new lover, Female Pantoran Jedi Asumi Tsuchi, promises him that she would be waiting for him to return, as Marik was still chatting it up with his significant other, Falleen Jedi Zule Xiss, promising to build a cabin on Mandalore someday, to which she swooned, but told him to focus ahead.

It was tough times, but with their home under the control of two wannabe Sith Lords, they would not allow this to stand.

So far, the Prowlers remained undetected, and when the signal is given, they would fire the first shot and harass the defenders, destroying some of the fleet and creating a diversion to lessen casualties on their side. The Deathwatch Mandalorians had no idea at this point.

It is also worth mentioning that the Prowlers were armed with the experimental Crossbow Missile pods that contained nuclear-tipped warheads capable of destroying whole ships as long as the shields are down. It was experimental, but if the operation was a success, mass production would begin immediately for the newer ships, as well as retrofitting old ones with this weapon.

War and Death, carrying their payload of Spartan IVs and Clone Commandoes, were stationed above their first targets. The Spartans stayed onboard, waiting for the first shots to be fired to cover their drops. They would use their armor to drop in as the Clones would use the Drop Pods, and the agents and their STARU squads would use the Pelicans when an all clear signal was given. The order was Spartan IVs first, then after 10 minutes, the Drop Pods, and after 20 minutes, the Pelicans to ensure that no suspicion would be given behind their lines, as the Prowlers would jump between their drop points and behind their lines when the fire started to kick up.

It was ten minutes in now, and so far, none of the Deathwatch Mandalorians had picked up their trail. The Prowlers began to move in positions where their new toys can not only deal the maximum damage, but also the maximum amount of ships caught in their blast radius to further weaken the fleet. God Eye has such weapons but was abstained from interfering directly unless everything went South, as that prowler was more of providing tactical support.

They also had UNSC AIs in place, to help with cyber-warfare and coordination with the newly named Rogue Battalion as they began updating their firewalls to prevent counter-hacks. Although Mandalorians were not known for hacking, the advantages shown with cyber-warfare would help even the odds. The Prosecutor's AI, using the Avatar of a female UNSC admiral named Cassidy, reported in. "Sir, all Prowlers are now in their assigned positions. Fireworks will

start on your orders." She said. The Fleet was stationed just 10,000 miles away from Mandalore, and sensor range, and will be able to Jump straight in when the operation begins. The location was perfect as it took approximately 60 seconds in hyperspace to arrive.

"Good." Kal said as he put on his helmet. "Commence the Countdown. Tell the Prowlers to begin operations immediately. They have 60 seconds until we start our assault. Helmsmen, jump us."

While Kal never considered himself to be a good Commander, he was the one who took command and leads his people straight into the fire, for Mandalore. He was leading the whole Clone/Ne'tra Kad combined fleet to Mandalore, with Admiral Grace Chen backing him up from the UNSC side.

An affirmative later, and the entire fleet was in motion.

{UNSC War, before the attack commences.}

Commander Escandor was with Crimson and Aqua as they got into position. It is determined that Lost Legion had 6 targets to attack: 2 Anti-Air Camps, 2 Death Watch prison camps, and 2 Military bases closest to the main capital on Mandalore itself. Although the Prowlers were above only the military bases, Lost Legion would use their slipspace technology on their Mjolnir suits to slingshot to the other 4 targets, as they were in close proximity, with Hunter branches taking the farthest Camps from the Capital, with Warrior taking the middle ground, and Fortress taking the closer camps, as they were expected to be heavily guarded and easily reinforced. Due to Fortress' ability to take and hold positions, along with their heavy weaponry, they were most suited to the task. Though daunting, Command said that rebels that did not bow to Maul and Savage were standing by outside the camps, aiding the Spartans, and the Drop Pods would drop in and help out after the initial drop. The Clone Commando squads were paired with each Spartan IV squad, so it was 2 Clone Commando squads for each Spartan IV Squad in. Delta and Aurora would aid Fireteam Crimson, Bacta and Rancor would support Fireteam Aqua, Fury and Epsilon would assist Fireteam Outlaw, Alpha and Omega partnered up with Fireteam Napalm, Steel and Phi would aid Fireteam Gospel, and finally, Fireteam Royal gets Fireteam Trinity, Ruckus and Wampa. And there were still more Commando squads onboard, plus the promise of reinforcements when the carriers break the blockade earlier. This is much different than before as this time, they will be more of a Shadow this time, so that means they must be silent and unseen.

For now, their plan was break in, and defend. Hunter branch was less suited for such operations than Warrior and Fortress branch, but they can still handle it. As the drop pods that carried Omega squad out, Lance was with Gospel and Napalm, going over with their armaments and battle plan. The ARC troopers would be the first to enter the atmosphere along with Ne'tra Kad commandoes, and the regular clones would follow suit.

Lance has been checking over his gear in his room, while looking over his lover, Wren, who was fixing her helmet and TACPAD. Lance had to be professional, but Wren suddenly tackled him and kissed him passionately, who returned it. After a while, they broke off, with Wren mouthing "later", engaging her helmet over her face. Lance smiled wistfully, before doing the same. Wren helped him up before

she left for the armory. Lance decided to check up on his subordinates in the other sections of the Prowler. So far, Lost Legion was split up between two Prowlers, with 3 Fireteams each.

Lance never gave a lot of speeches. Personally, he simply said "All death is certain. The question is: Whose death are you going to be, for you or for the enemy?" He saved long speeches for those really desperate moments where all hope is lost. But Lance knows when to say something and when to shut up, plus I he was a good tactician. He knew when to cover his bases.

His men began to open the airlocks and pretty soon, they were standing outside, with their boots keeping them firmly on the surface of the ship. Most had a mixture of new weaponry with some old, tried and true UNSC weapons to exotic Promethean and Covenant weaponry. Nothing was gonna hold them back. While this was black ops, Mandalorians are now slouches in combat, with Kal describing them on par with ODS in terms of fighting tenacity and skill.

Overlord took his Assault rifle and locked it in place alongside his SAW and locked them up and made sure that the shields were on maximum to prevent them from being melted. Unlike this jump, they were going to go full on the impact in order gain the advantage and level the enemy to bedrock.

The UNSC had brought in their ships, a few key Cruisers, fighters, and Destroyers, and a Rock of Gibraltar class super carrier, but will only intervene when the going gets tough on the Mandalorians. A few Frigates and Destroyers are there to intercept any enemy reinforcements harassing the Mandalorian attackers. Kal Skirata wanted this win to be won only by Mandalorians to signify their strength, but he acknowledge that should any outside forces attempt to intervene, the UNSC will assist them as much as possible.

Normally, to the UNSC, it would have taken much longer to plan any attack on this planet without info. But thanks to underground New Mandalorian rebel fighters, information was coming in smooth and clean. More surprising, especially to Obi-Wan, was that Satine herself was the one gathering intel. It was a far cry for a woman like her to do something only a soldier could do, but she was not afraid and can prove that she can shoot down her enemies as much as she can talk them down. She wore a Mandalorian Shock Trooper Armor that had blue and gold paint splattered on it. She had been feeding Kal info since the beginning of Kal's deal with the UNSC, significantly shortening the amount of time used for gathering info and now used to plan the attack. A Far Cry from her normally pacifistic attitude, Satine realized that if her people are to be truly free from tyranny of the Sith brothers, she had to make large sacrifices for the sake of her planet. A trait most Mandalorians, especially Kal Skirata, admired, as they previously scorned her and her more pacifistic philosophy that most New Mandalorians were known for.

Now, it had come to fruition, and it came down to the Spartans to help secure a beachhead for the rest of the Clones. As for the Spartan IIs of their group, they were stationed onboard Silence, as they would be dropped in when the heat on a certain team is significant and backup is needed. Also, because they had their own

mission as well.

As soon as the attack on Sundari would begin, they would land straight over the old Capital City, Keldabe, directly on top of the Forerunner signal that originated from the planet. They would find it and hopefully do so before Maul and Deathwatch know of its existence. They will foreshadow the Clone Commandos jumping with them. Meaning that while the Deathwatch is focused entirely on the Commandos, the Spartans will back them up and begin sabotaging the enemy as soon as the facilities are secure, and enter the city to wreck havoc on strong points that will hamper the ground forces on the ground. Both cities were heavily guarded, so they would have to weaken Keldabe first before they can aid the Mandalorians in eliminating the Sith brothers on Mandalore.

Overlord took his position next to the Hunter Branch Crimson and will go with them first, with a few of the backup Spartans that arrived plus the Original Crimson (now known as Fireteam Mercury), backing up Aqua, and Majestic was to reinforce whatever position was compromised by Lost Legion. No one doubted Lost Legion's skills, but the Mandalorians are no pushovers, either.

As for the CBMI Agents Barriss and Ventress, they would arrive as soon as the LZ was clear for the rest of the army, and will sneak away from invasion force to link up with Napalm and Gospel to infiltrate and assassinate Maul and Savage.

Soon, Kal Skirata finally gave the word, and as four of the Prowlers began to fire, the Spartans used the cover of destruction to hide their drop, and the drop pods not long after their descent.

The Crossbow weapons systems were experimental at best, due to the amount of destructive firepower it can rain down on an enemy. Add the fact that each missile holds at least one thermobaric and nuclear payload and even the latest in shield technology could not hope to block so much kinetic power smashing into them. But there was a chance it could backfire, so testing was needed.

Targeting the largest and more clustered of the Deathwatch fleet, the Prowlers let loose their payload and created new stars with the burning wrecks of the Deathwatch ships, causing disarray and almost causing some of the behemoth ships to crash into each other.

30 seconds in the barrage and the fleet was now trying to target the Prowlers, but they slipspace jumped before they got a bead on them, and now their backs were turned when Kal arrived. Letting loose with Turbolasers and proton missiles and cannons, they unleashed hell on the unsuspecting Deathwatch. Most of the ships had their ships facing the wrong way, with only a few ships truly prepared for the barrage when it hit them hard. Some fighters came from the destroyed wrecks in a desperate attempt to stop the invasion, but failed as the fighters from Kal's group engaged theirs.

Venators began to unleash their payload, both with the turbolasers and the fighters in the docks. The transport ships are waiting for the all clear, with the Clones and Mandalorian Shock Troopers ready to deploy.

Fighters from both sides began harassing and destroying each other in vicious dogfights. Heavily damaged, all the surviving DeathWatch

ships could do was wait and die as turbolasers ripped them asunder.

Kal ordered the a Wedge Formation with his flagship, the Prosecutor, and the heavier ships up front, with Venators and Acclamator class ships hanging back and throwing down lasers on the Deathwatch. Kal learned this tactic from the UNSC, and soon saw some merit in their tactics.

At the very least, they would not take long as they smashed through the enemy formation, as the carcasses of the enemy ships still formed a small blockade over the planet.

{Mandalore, Atmosphere}

The Commandoes dropped 20 seconds after the Spartans dropped first. The plan of attack was, the Spartans would drop first, but would use their shield manipulation devices to slow their descent, allowing the drop pods to come in first, so that when the defenders are caught unawares by the attacking commandos, they will drop in and silence them quickly, then will proceed to the city while the commandos defended the sites.

As expected, the kinetic energy gathered from the drop pods exploded outwards, violently expelling anything around the 30 meters of the drop pod before the hatched exploded out, with one smacking a Mandalorian who just arrived and he and the door flew across the room to the wall.

Commandos began exiting and blasting the Deathwatch soldiers, with True Mandalorian rebel forces taking this signal to attack other outposts and distract the larger element away from the drop zones.

The Spartans dropped 60 seconds later, smashing into the reinforcements and cutting them down like paper to a shredder.

While it could be argued that their entrance was more flashy than a usual stealth drop, the Commandos immediately opened fire and made themselves the bigger threat than the Spartan, who promptly stealthed out of existence and moved in the direction of the city to begin phase two of the plan, which was to delay enemy reinforcements by destroying key facilities inside and surrounding the city and the landing zone targets, sabotaging supply lines, and whatever can get the enemy away from the commandos and into the city.

30 minutes into the plan, a counter-offensive on the now Commando-held positions was now underway, as multiple hostiles in dark armor and red visors began opening fire on the positions, with the Commandos calmly picking them off easily.

Suddenly, an explosion from behind the enemy formation distracted them and had some of the soldiers break off to investigate, with the rest still taking on the Clones. While still outnumbered, the plan was slowly working as the numbers began to slow down for them. Suddenly, blaster fire came from the sky as MAATs came down.

From their side, Darman and his team realized that the transports were few in number, but held insignias of the Ne'tra Kad. He realized that the fleet finally broke through and sent in Vanguarders to relieve

the Commandos. He activated his newly acquired TACPAD, courtesy of the UNSC and phoned in Rei, Lance's AI who was overseeing the whole thing, including the black ops side of the conflict.

"Rei, this is Omega-1, what's the status of the fleet?"

"They broke through the defenders and are attacking military installations or suspected DeathWatch facilities on the planet. They are currently regrouping and are sending the ground troops to those areas, but Ne'tra Kad and 187th Legion and Hades Corps are gonna take the capital. Their ships will arrive in 10 minutes time."

"Copy that. Any chance for those Mantis vehicles the UNSC supplied us with?"

"Affirmative, arriving on your position in approximately 2 minutes is 25 seconds." With that, Rei cut the link to coordinate with other leaders of the operation.

{Fireteam Royal, overlooking a storage and refueling center B}

"This is Angel. Sound off, team."

"Prince here, overlooking the facility now."

"Tokyo here, ready with the programs. Say the word and they will disable all electronic devices in the facility."

"Omen here. Explosives primed and ready to detonate. Be advised that as soon as this bad boy blows up, the enemy will see the smoke."

"Rogue here, in position outside of command bunker and awaiting your orders to breach."

Angel then commed in to confirm. "Excellent. Like Omen said, as soon as this starts, enemy will notice the smoke, so we have up to 10 minutes tops before we bug out and move to the next objective. Wrap this up quick, guys."

Affirmatives were sounded off, and Angel gave the go order.

As soon as he did, explosives placed in the armory and key areas, including mess hall and barracks, blew asunder, taking a lot of DeathWatch guards off duty at the time. Sarah "Rogue" Clarke then breached the main control hub and took out the CIC of the facility, gunning down troopers with her Scattershot and dealing with both the guards and officers in the room.

Prince took out the more dangerous individuals who might be more of a threat to his team mates, while his wife, Lulu "Tokyo" Zanadakiri-Prince, detonated a signal that copied information from the enemy database, while planting viruses to disrupt communications and other sensitive information.

Angel himself was at the garage with Omen, taking out swaths of enemies and laying waste to most, if not all, of the forces in there at the time, with Tokyo and Rogue cleaning out the hallways, and Prince wiping out all forces out in the open.

All in all, it took 9 minutes and 30 seconds, before they moved on.

The same can be said with an AA site, 3 communications towers, and 2 defensive fortifications in the outskirts of Keldabe.

30 minutes later, the entire legion regrouped in an abandoned building inside the old capital city, near the market districts. The city was now alert, with the citizens or non-combatants taking shelter underground.

"Alright, phase 2 has been completed. Now we will divide once more. Royal and Crimson will proceed to the CBMI rendezvous on the main HQ, Outlaw and Aqua will remain above ground to assist invasion forces, while Napalm and Gospel will proceed to the Forerunner signal location." Overlord said, with Wizard from Fireteam Crimson speaking out.

"Sir, what if the civilians will be the way, how should we proceed?" He asked.

"Non-lethal takedowns, and put them in somewhere secure. I don't know if the Mandalorians trained their kids to shoot, but don't take any chances. Most of the Mandalorians fight like our ODSs."

"Yeah, but they bleed and suck like ours too." Jose "Titan" Laruscain scoffed, with a 3/4ths of the legion chuckling over his remark. Lance found it amusing but told him to zip it.

"They had their pants down looking for the wrong enemy. We keep to the shadows and it'll stay that way. Good or bad, we can say they suck when we get out with scratches on the paint." Overlord joked a bit, but barely got a reaction from his team mates.

"Everyone's a critic."

Overlord then tapped on his TACPAD and soon, a visage of a young girl with data lines steaming over her face.

"Rei, status update."

"The invasion is proceeding as planned. 187th Legion and Hades Corps are landing troops now, and are assembling a vanguard to secure a foothold in the city."

"Anything else?"

"DeathWatch is disorganized by the attacks, but is rallying into the city. At least the middle and inner districts are heavily guarded now. Be advised that your position will overrun in 2 minutes. Recommend that you bug out before now."

Overlord was relaxed in his tone when he replied. "Relax, we got it covered. This building, and 5 others like it, are wired to blow up the second we leave here. Will give those Mandalorians a hard time to regroup for a proper defense when we're done." Lance explained.

Rei was satisfied, before she logged out, and soon after, the Legion split up into 3 groups, one to distract, one to assassinate, and one to discover hidden relics buried under the sands.

{Prosecutor, Mandalore Orbit, 10 minutes later.}

Kal Skirata was watching the holotable, seeing the battle play out as it unfolded. Skirmishes and campaigns were waged and won in quick succession, with 187th and Hades Corps getting ready to assault the city.

Hades Corps troops were located just 2 miles south of the Sundaril, while 187th took places north of the city, with auxiliary battalions taking the flanks. They were gonna smash the Deathwatch between a hammer and an anvil, with nowhere to go for the Sith located in the main HQ.

Ne'tra Kad and 57th Rancor Company would be taking care of Keldabe, with the majority of Kal's clan opting to retake the old Capital with the exclusion of the Nulls, who were tasked with aiding Hades Corps in pushing through Sundari.

He was assured by the CBMI that they were gonna take care of them before they were able to rally the troops. He could count on them, but just to be sure, he sent his Commandos to catch up whenever they can. The CBMI team of Offee and Ventress agreed, as long as they arrived in time. But that wasn't all.

Before the battle started, he received a secret transmission from Ventress, who was told to send him a list of coordinates for him and his associates to meet in the city. According to the coordinates, it led straight down. When he asked about it, he was told that the UNSC found something related to the Milky Way, one that the UNSC is willing to share, along with the Jedi Council, if their suspicions were correct. She said to wait for their call again and they would meet there.

Kal wanted more reasons to go there, so Ventress spilled out the information about the Forerunners: an ancient race of highly advanced people whose technology shaped the course of the Milky Way Galaxy. Ventress studied about them during her training as a CBMI agent. She was told 3 months ago that during a study into an ancient Forerunner ruin (no she was not gonna tell him about the Absolute Record, she would leave that to her superiors.) found a Forerunner signal located under the very capital they were assaulting.

Kal was skeptical of her, but agreed when Ventress said that she and Offee would escort him and his associates to see truth.

As soon as the transmission ended, Kal was rather sour. He realized that while the UNSC helped him, fulfilling their end of the bargain was simply half-truth. Nonetheless, they were not stabbing him in the back yet, so he kept his suspicions on them quiet for a while.

Besides, he needed to retake Mandalore first. Ordering for his shuttle, he headed down into the hangar to head to where the troops were rallying.

If he was to take his world back, he will take it with a blaster pistol in one hand and a thermal detonator in the other. He wouldn't have it in any other way.

The LAAT took him and a few of his officers to Sundari, the domed Capital of New Mandalore.

{CBMI Prowler God Eye, Meanwhileâ€|}

"Madam, your approach vector is clear, moving to drop zone now." Captain Stiles said to a Mirilian in a cloak and ODST battle armor on her, with a determined look on her face. Agent Offee nodded and left to the hangars.

Ventress was already loading an M6 Magnum to her side holster, and also brought a Plasma Pistol and grenade to bypass harder defenses that needed more brute force. Offee only had the Magnum and flahsbangs, along with an advanced, prototype cloak system that allowed other operatives aside from the user to cloak, as long as the user was in a 5 mile radius, freeing up other operatives to use other equipment on the field. The name of such system was the Type 80-Energy Image Displacer, or otherwise known as "Eclipse".

Ventress took with her a hardlight shield and a bubble shield to aid her partner or use when surrounded or pinned under heavy fire.

"Ready to go?" Ventress asked.

"We are clear." Offee said.

"I've been waiting for this moment. Savage had this coming a long time ago." She snarled. Offee simply sighed.

"Save it when we see him. For now, we meet up with Escandor's people, and then proceed to the objective. I promise, he's yours when we get there."

Ventress smiled. "Thanks, partner. My deal is about to end with Savage, and to be honest, I never trusted the Terrans to keep their end of the deal like this. And to be partnered with you, well, I think I must be mellowing now." Ventress joked.

Barriss gave a small grin. "Anytime, partner. Just don't lose your edge now." She reminded. Barriss worked with Ventress long enough to be jovial around her, even considering her to be a friend, though that term is used loosely.

They climbed onboard a Pelican and began to hover and move out of the hangar bay to the war torn surface below.

As agents, they have are detached and professional in their jobs, but for Ventress, she decided to take a little pleasure in burning down the house that Savage was living in.

****NOTE:** This next story is the reason I took so long, as I had rewritten this twice, the first because the premise was dumb, and the second out of UH-60 Nightstalker's advice. Now, I want you guys to give me ideas for a secondary story, through reviews or PM. The guidelines are that the ideas are set before this operation, involves UNSC and Jedi interaction, and using characters that are rarely mentioned. I hope this sets the bar for you guys. For now, here is the story for Padme and Anakin.**

Secondary Story: A Screaming Diplomat

{Worth, Hangar Area B, 2 days after the therapy.}

"So, I heard your wife is pregnant." A rather tall and large man approached a Jedi, whose back was turned and seemed to be busy working on an engine.

"Yeah, and what does that concern you?" The Jedi asked rather defensively, his back turned.

"Oh nothing." The man said innocently.

"What do you mean "nothing"?" The Jedi said, wondering what he wants.

"You mean, you seriously don't know?" The man said incredulously.

"What do I know?" The Jedi asked patiently, but barely as his attention was on the engine.

"Come on, guess?"

"Ummmm, it's her birthday?"

"Nope." The man sighed.

"Uhh, I have no clue?" The Jedi said irritatingly, his patience worn thin.

"Did you not check your communications device?"

"It was silent." The Jedi replied. The man sighed. "Check it, then."

Annoyed, but curious, he retrieved it near his tool box and began to activate it.

Immediately he was bombarded with loud voices from the small device.

"WHERE ARE YOU?" A feminine voice in high pitch screamed over as the sound of another woman in pain dominated the audio background. Anakin was surprised to see Daniel's Pantoran wife, Riyo, dominating his field of view, looking very displeased.

"We've been trying to contact you for 10 minutes now!" She said sternly.

"What happened?" Anakin said, his tone serious now.

"Padme's water just broke!" Anakin choked up a bit. That meant that Padme was ready to give birth. "Where are you?" He asked with sudden urgency.

"Genesis Medical Facility, just South of the Command Post Alpha." The Pantoran said as Anakin quickly grabbed his things and began running. "I was about to call Daniel now when you finally answered."

"Hey, babe." Daniel made himself known, as Anakin mentally face palmed. He did not recognize nor acknowledge him earlier. Riyo smiled seeing him. "After we delivered Padme, I went over to Anakin so that I can fetch him over."

"Thank you, sweetheart." Riyo said, then turned to Anakin. "Padme was calling for you for a while now, and when she couldn't get a hold of you, she called me. Some husband you are." She said indignantly, and before Anakin could think of a reply, she disconnected the link. Anakin looked over to the tall man and asked. "Why didn't you tell me straight?"

Daniel gave his reply with another question. "Why didn't answer your communicator when Padme called?"

Anakin then realized that he had kept the communicator in his robes, which he took off, and when he took it back, he did not notice any calls after. "Uhhhhhh." Truthfully, just as much as he loved his wife, he also loved starfighters, and when given a chance to upgrade and improve his starfighter, he jumped at the chance and turned off all distractions, including incoming calls.

Daniel simply shook his head. "Never mind, Padme will chew you out later." Anakin gulped with that. She was kind and compassionate, but her temper made Mustafar look like Hoth in winter. And with her giving birth, that made it even more hazardous to Anakin's wellbeing. That was made known during Padme's emotional instability during her 8 month of being pregnant. She yelled Anakin out of the house simply because he mixed up cabbages with lettuce in her soup, two Terran food ingredients that the Jedi are adjusted to consuming.

Putting that worry to the back of his head, he raced Daniel to his wife's side in Genesis Medical. He would worry about that later, as he was now worrying about her wellbeing first.

Besides, it can't be that bad, right?

{Genesis Medical Facility, 5 minutes later...}

Even Jedi can be wrongâ€¦|

"OH GOSH! BY THE FORCE I'M GONNA KILL HIM!" Padme screamed as she began to push. Her husband was still a good 60 seconds away but her voice was loud enough that Escandor could hear it from the Command Hub, a good 1 mile out from the Medical Facility.

Anakin heard it and began to sweat drop, his speed now becoming more and more sluggish. Anakin thought of back out, but Daniel pushed from behind him, causing him to stumble and move forward.

"Not so fast, Chosen One. Your wife will flay me alive if I don't bring you in." Daniel said.

"But then she will flay me alive!" Anakin exclaimed. Try as he might, he can't escape the Spartan's grip.

"Better you than me pal!" He cheerily replied, earning a glare from Anakin. It did not take long for the men to reach the ward where Padme was, and the observation deck was already full. Anakin could see Riyo, Ahsoka, Drake, Scout, Siri, Obi-Wan, Masters Windu and

Yoda, who coincidentally was visiting the hospital to check up on some of the recovering Jedi. Padme was on a birthing table as both droid and nurse toiled at the doctor's orders to deliver the babies.

The nurse then saw Anakin and gestured to him to come over to the side. Anakin complied.

"You the father?" Anakin only nodded.

The nurse then instructed him to take his wife's hand and provide support.

Padme was in pain, but when Anakin took her hand, she had a moment of clarity and smiled. "You came." She said.

"I wouldn't miss this for the world." Unfortunately for Anakin, her mood swings picked up again, and then did something no one expected.

She sucker punched Anakin in the throat, yelling: "Where have you been?!"

The small audience winced at the sight, even Master Yoda's eyes twitched at seeing a display of sudden violence. Clearly, her mood swings were up in full gear this time. Yoda had once seen Padme before this and it was not pretty.

Padme was screaming bloody murder, between asking why he took so long and ripping him apart a new one for being late. Anakin tried to calm her down, still not recovered from Padme's throat punch.

"I-urk-still-Ugh-arrive-*cough*" He would have finished with on time, but clearly Padme really hit him good.

Seeing her husband's state, her mood swings just went from angry to sad. "Anakin, oh my gosh, I am so sorry! Please forgive me." She cried, tears coming down as she being to cry uncontrollably. The doctor in charge then narrowed his eyes at his colleagues. "What medicine did you give her? I thought I told you to give her sedatives!" He hissed, and the nurse in charge cringed.

The said blunderer was about to respond, but Padme screamed in pain again, and all other concerns would have to be put on a back burner for now.

Anakin forced whatever pain (and bile) he had in his throat out and began to comfort his wife, holding her had for support.

She screamed mightly as the children came out, first the girl, whom Padme gripped harder than a garbage compactor, nearly crushed Anakin's organic hand, so he had to let go, and use his other hand, the one with the metal on it. Padme didn't care, as long as she had something to hold on to, because it hurt like hell.

The second child came out, with less difficulty than the first, but it was still difficult.

She weakly gestured the children over to Padme, and she sighed in

joy. "They are twins." The doctor announced to Padme as he gently gave them over to the mother for her to hold onto.

The observers and witnesses of the whole thing had varied reactions, but it was generally that of predominant joy and hope.

Riyo was glad her friend finally did it, and she knows that she will make a great mother. She hopes that she and Daniel will get the same chance to be parents as well, they were trying after all. Daniel, while glad of the new family with their children, was rather scared if Riyo gets pregnant. Mood swings made their wives so intimidating, it made Jiralhanae Chieftains look as scary as puppies trying to scare off intruders.

Obi-Wan was both glad and sorry for his former apprentice. Glad he is now a father, and slightly sorry that he had to deal with a wife with a scorching temper and unpredictable mood swings. At least they were over now, thank Heavens. Siri took this as a sign of things to come with Obi-Wan. She wondered if they were ready for such a responsibility but knew that day was long off.

Master Windu, while very adherent to the Jedi Code, had a small smile on his face. He was told all his life that emotion could very well lead to the Dark Side, but sometimes, like this moment, it can also lead to new life and a better future worth fighting for.

The other two Jedi present, Scout and Drake, who were now officially a couple, had varying reactions, with Drake nearly fainting when he saw the child pop out of(not literally)of Padme. Scout cringed at the pain that Padme was feeling, and the beating Anakin took from her. But the both squeezed each other's hands, knowing they could do the same too, just not now, since they are taking it slow.

And Master Yoda felt more joy than he had in weeks. The loss of the temple was a great blow to him, and this new event has sparked joy and hope that the future would be brighter than ever before.

And with the UNSC, he hopes that will be the case.

"I'm here." He whispered, taking and holding one of the children from his wife so she can hold the girl, and he can hold the boy.

She smiled at the baby boy. "Luke." And when she looked at the girl, she already knew what she would name her. "Leia." She said. Anakin was too relieved to argue names. "They are perfect." He agreed. And the mother and father held their children, and themselves, tight. Everyone looked melancholic and even old Master Yoda allowed himself to relish in the joy of new life.

Times were changing indeed. With the birth of the children, it signified that the new direction of the Jedi will hold them strong in the decades to come.

****AND THAT'S IT! Short, huh? Well, I am following advice and adding in new as I go along. Also, I will hope you guys enjoy this too. Now I can make my own secondary stories, but if you guys think you have a better idea, let me know. Make it convincing though, like explaining it if you can. Thanks and review. ****

11. Episode 11

****OKAY, here is my latest chapter. It took long because I am busy with school and other stuff. Also, if you are confused by how the Spartans are called, go back to Episode 3 and Episode 8 for the names of my OC Spartans. OH and thanks to Patriot-112 for his Mandalorian Trooper Besk Vorp and Clone trooper OCs, Besk Vorp, Topsy and Pinger.****

****And someone asked for Blue Team, well, here they are.****

Episode 11: House Cleaning.

{Mandalore, Upper Atmosphere, 5 hours into the assault}

Kal was getting reports that while the invasion was making incredible progress, things slowed down when Sundari and Keldabe had beefed up their manpower. Keldabe was caught off guard, and already lost a small district, but the fighting was intense and Death Watch was not giving it up without a fight.

Also, he has heard reports that Death Watch has sealed Sundari and are now preparing to take their last stand. He allowed the AI to sabotage them as best they can but also found something else through the cameras: The Death Watch was using civilians.

Whether drafting them off the street, to making them live bombers, albeit with much threatening by soldiers, it was clear that Death Watch was now gonna hit them hard and were gonna sacrifice countless civilians in the city to do it. Lost Legion Commander, Overlord, promised to commit 4 squads to help out, two for aiding his troops, and another to strike at the Sith who hold their reigns. But it seemed that the chances of keeping the civilians out of the crossfire are now out the window. And while he had confidence his men can handle this, Death Watch was going to maximize the collateral damage, something Kal Skirata was trying to minimize.

Kal reconsidered asking Overlord recommit his forces to help out with the hostage crisis and retake the city, but then remembered that there were two extra Spartan Squads waiting in orbit to assist. As much as he wanted to make this a victory he and his people could call his own, the lives of his people, innocent civilians, were hanging on a very thin thread. And from what he remembered, these were veterans from the Great War the UNSC and Covenant waged, so if they decided to play dirty, these Spartans can help keep rank.

He was even given a code to activate such assets to his designated location. Sighing, he tapped on the comms as his ship began its descent onto the planet below.

"Echo-X-Ray-November 97652312. Authenticate." He said.

"Stand by." An automated female voice responded. "Confirmation successful, Assets Blue and Red are activated. Please input coordinates for drop-off."

Kal Skirata typed in the coordinates to the domed city of Sundari. The female voice then said. "Coordinates locked, T-Minus 5 minutes to landfall. Good Hunting, Skirata."

He was told and he has read how these particular Spartans have pulled victory from the Jaws of defeat.

Now, he will only hope that the Spartans had the strength to save his people from the cruelty of Death Watch and the Sith.

{Sundari, Domed Capital City of New Mandalore, now under Death Watch Mandalore control.}

If you could see it in space, Sundari would appear as a black dot in the middle of all the drab olive of the desert that surrounded that place. It was protected, both from the environment and any invasion force that dared to approach the walls. It was also a place of enlightenment and progress, one which the Death Watch had put down hard and fast. In the months that followed their takeover, they had killed many students and teachers and drafted many innocents to be part of the army, as a way of bolstering forces for their war-mongering.

With the arrival of the coming Ne'tra Kad and Rogue Clones, the Death Watch are now using tactics that would normally disturb any morally conscious soldier: using civilians as bombs, drafting children into soldiers, even binding women and tying weapons on their hands and use them as bait as other Death Watch would ambush from the shadows. It was a desperate time for them, so if they can make the enemy weep and bleed as they defeat Death Watch, they would do so.

If they were gonna lose, they were gonna make them bleed out long after they die.

But unfortunately, those plans were short-lived when the defenses, both air and ground, in the entire dome-city, suddenly blasted away at the Death Watch forces that were in the area, forcing them all to destroy their only chance of holding the line against the New Mandalorian/Rogue Company invasion force. That left only Death Watch soldiers and vehicles capable of fighting the enemy. And the cameras caught it all.

"Gotcha." Rei, the AI in charge of overseeing the cyber-warfare and AI operations in the invasion, smiled.

{Sundari, lower atmosphere, 1 mile away from entrance to the city}

"Kal, all forces are accounted for and ready to launch on your orders." Captain Rex reported as the drop ships he and Kal Skirata are in are now hovering close to the city. It had been relatively quick, and in less than 12 hours, backed up the main Death Watch force to Sundari and the rest fled to Keldabe or the mountainside.

He had regrouped every free company or trooper not occupied with the enemy and gathered outside to prepare the push to retake the capital. Keldabe was as good as theirs, so the most defenses came unto Sundari. So now, everything led to this.

Truly, the UNSC was to thank for taking so much from the enemy without paying a lot blood for it.

Kal finally snapped back to reality and began assessing the

situation. So far, the AI told him that there were at least 100 cases of civilians used as either suicide bombers or bait in some of the tighter areas of the city. And to rescue all of them would be impossible unless the reinforcements he ordered from the UNSC would arrive in time. He had ordered all combat-ready Commando squads ready to do their job and protect and rescue the civilians as much as they can.

Suddenly, the communications officer was hailed by the New Mandalorian rebels, promising their support and ready to fight. Their leader was, surprisingly, Duchess Satine.

She was a far cry from her regal outfit, looking more and more like a battle ready Mandalorian of old than a pacifistic and tame leader that most of them thought they were. She even had a scar running down her left cheek and her eyes had bags underneath. Clearly, the months had not been kind to the woman.

When the Sith brothers came to power, she refused to run against such a horrible foe, and to ensure her people are not harmed under their rule when they (violently) took power. Though she was peaceful, their methods of subjugation over her people, mass murdering, threatening, raping and even flaying her people for standing up against such an evil made her learn a very important lesson: How to loathe the Sith. Maul and Savage then tortured her with extreme prejudice, even planning to execute her afterwards, in front of a band of political opponents who defied Death Watch. And it would have worked too. They took her to a prison, unannounced and unexpected, to put her down swiftly and without mercy, and was gonna broadcast the whole thing to the entire planet, as they did not wish to contain their lesson of why you shouldn't go against the Sith Brothers to just their opponents alone

As they were about to end her, a Mandalorian rebel team then stormed the prison she was held in, and blasted their way to free as many prisoners as they can, Satine included. Although her saviors were Mandalorians who hates the pacifism of the New Mandalorians, they hated Deathwatch even more for selling their people out to the Sith. She begged her saviors to give her the means to save her people, even if it meant forsaking her values. She was strong-willed, but the Sith broke her along the way.

Now, here she was, seething and back for revenge and justice, not necessarily in that order.

"Kal Skirata. Glad to see you made it." Satine said in a professional manner. Kal found it rather weird considering that he knew how pacifistic the New Mandalorians are, none more so than their leader.

"Duchess Satine. You are a proper Mandalorian now. Not unwelcome, but very surprising." Kal remarked.

Satine smirked. She was no longer a stranger to violence. "What can you say, Skirata? Peace can only hold out for so long when my people are butchered like cattle for retaliating." She snarled. Kal saw some anger, but she kept it controlled, waiting to unleash it on the right foe.

"From what I understand, you've been doing this for 6 months now.

Very impressive, indeed." Almost a year ago, she would have been the last person you would be seeing wearing Mandalorian shock armor. Now she looks like a proper warrior, her posture was no longer graceful, but more erect, disciplined, and even fierce. Whoever taught her to fight must have been a harsh teacher for her to look like and act like this.

"Correct me if I'm wrong, Duchess," Kal said the last word with emphasis "but almost a year ago, you wouldn't be caught dead wearing a Mandalorian armor but here you are, looking like one of the Cuy'val Dar. Tell me: who trained you?"

She stepped aside and suddenly, 3 Mandalorians suddenly dominated his holo communicator. Kal took a moment to realize who they were.

"Isabet Reau, Dred Priest and Cort Davin. The Forbidden Three. I must say, this is a welcome surprise, given your reputation." He and they are good allies, but their penchant for collateral damage was rather astounding. Isabet and Dred were an item when Cort came into their circle. During the beginnings of Cuy'val Dar, they raised their reputation as the most rough, no-holds barred type of warriors that ever existed, with all of their missions usually ending in collateral damage of all sorts, with blowing up a car their most minor "collateral" damage they had.

Also, they were once Death Watch's most ardent supporters, until their leader, Pre Vizsla, began to use extreme methods, even so much as use civilians as bombs. While they longed for a Mandalorian Empire, using methods that harmed the Mandalorians more than helping them drew a line, but they crossed it when Vizsla teamed up with Maul and Savage. And had been leading New Mandalorian forces not crushed by Death Watch into open rebellion, with their first act to raid the prison Satine was in at the time. Thought reluctant, they brought her along too after Cort explained that they must have all the men and women they can get to oppose the Sith.

Pure Coincidence, but they had more than they gained, with Satine their newest and most eager member.

Isabet chuckled. "Say what you will about us, Kal. But I hate Death Watch lap dogs and the Sith Overlords who rule this place. And we just so happens that we had an open slot in our ranks. So I think it's safe to say that our interests for our people lie with this young child you talked to earlier." She said.

Dred then talked to Kal. "And we heard that you are the man we have to thank for this invasion force. I must say, the UNSC are good with their word, and considering how they kicked ass in Coruscant. Word of an enormous UNSC ship ramming into a Venator is sure to turn heads." He chuckled. Although at first many thought that the reports about a Massive Terran warship ramming a Republic cruiser as nothing more embellished stories, they were soon made to eat their words when footage taken by a civilian freighter over Coruscant at the time surfaced, showing the Terran Flagship doing just that. Needless to say, it had turned many heads in the Galaxy and the forbidden 3 were no different

"Whatever you think of them," Kal said in reply. "Know that they are not the type of people who would backstab us. They have as much

riding on this as you do."

"And what interest would they relegate to a planet such as ours? Warriors? Weaponry?" Cort asked.

Kal knew the answer when he was briefed just as he descended into the planet. So that means that it was either the UNSC was coming clean now, or they had found the object already, with the two scenarios now more likely now.

"Well, it will take a while, but I will explain everything once we finish this." Kal promised, to which the 3 Mandalorians agreed.

Kal then turned his attention to one of the officers "Status on those reinforcements."

The officer turned and said, "They said, watch the skies." It was cryptic, but Kal knew what that meant.

The officer before then detected unidentified objects falling down from the sky and headed straight towards the domed city. Kal then gave the order to strike, and the AI opened the doors for the, and let loose the hounds of war.

{Keldabe, Underground Catacombs, 30 minutes before the assault.}

Fireteams Napalm and Gospel began moving slowly as they approached their targets. It was 10 minutes in and already they saw many civilians hiding underneath, trying to escape either the Death Watch or the explosions that rocked the city. Though cloaked, some children noticed them, due to their inquisitive nature and the fact that they were leaving tracks behind, in spite of their cloaking.

But fortunately, it was just the children as the adults were too busy hiding and preparing for the worst.

Eventually, they reached an empty intersection where there was mining equipment found and some power cables leading upwards. The Spartans then knew that the Sith must have found it, but are still unable to open the ruins themselves.

"All Elements, break off and scatter. Cover all entry points and booby trap the exits." Firebrand ordered and the two Spartan Fireteams broke off and began to move into different points, using their maps to guide them in. Sofia "Firebrand" Hendriks, leader of Napalm, was paired with Billy Leina "Magician" Kidd of Fireteam Gospel and went through the main entrance, cloaking up as they go, followed closely by Eliza "Voodoo" Klien and Lulu "Tokyo" Zandakiri-Prince as they proceeded inside.

As they reached closer, they heard noises of people talking, machines welding and even the occasional blaster fire. Signs that they were getting closer to the Forerunner structure.

They reached a large, open chamber, large enough to place 5 companies of Marines inside, there was death watch everywhere as some of them alternated between talking, guarding, sparring, readying and basically preparing to deal with all outside threats, but it was at the end of the hall that got Firebrand's attention.

It was a large silver gateway that was basically powered down, it was metallic silver, old, yet looked so new and brilliant. Firebrand then saw lots of people surrounding it, doing everything from studying, to examining some of the tech to even trying to breach their way inside using a large laser cutter. Firebrand smirked. The Forerunners built things to last, even from lasers. She had the activation codes for the device alone, but she had to clear the chamber first.

"Firebrand to all elements: Treasure is found, regroup on me and prepare to engage the targets designated." She ordered, and soon began to mark the turrets, heavily armored Soldiers and other targets of opportunity.

Once in position, Firebrand began to sync all neural links to her for maximum synchronization of the action. Now, all the targets were marked in her HUD and it was up to her to take the first shot. Now all she had to do was wait for the right moment.

{Sundari, Peace Park.}

A large recreational area developed as a place for young men and women to appreciate the peace of Mandalore, Peace park a place where people could visit, relax and enjoy the newfound prosperity of Mandalore.

Today, it is now littered with enough blood and corpses to turn it into a mass cemetery. Explosions blew apart enemy soldiers, lasers blasted everywhere and mechs stomped everywhere.

Captain Rex moved, giving orders left and right, hoping to keep the pressure up for the invasion. He had been fighting since he hit planet side and has been fighting ever since. Torrent Company had retaken 2 towns and an outpost and held a small AA emplacement against air forces not blown up by the fleet above. And now here he was, taking part in the final push.

The entire group had been informed of Spartans in the area but have so far yet to see them. The only thing they did see, however, was the numerous bullet casings, holes and dead bodies they left behind. Sometimes, some civilian claiming that a green metal droid with a golden visor saved him or her from certain death. Certainly, this made Captain rather anxious to meet them.

It wasn't as though he doubted his skills or his men's. It was simply because of how the UNSC brought them up that made them look legendary, or simple propaganda. He has still yet to see one really fight in action.

He got his wish.

One of his men, a Clone named Jessie, heard it. "Sir, sounds like a fight up ahead." Captain Rex gave no hesitation when he gave the next order.

"Men, form up on me. We are gonna assist them. Hardcase, try and get contact with them." Rex ordered. And the men began to form up on him, advancing with haste and caution to the sound of gunfire and laser blasts.

Rex peeked around the corner and saw the carnage. Death Watch soldier were laying on the ground, bleeding and dying, some with limbs torn off. The ones that were not dead are firing into a building structure. Whoever was inside was giving hell because 5 seconds later, 3 more hostiles fell to the ground, dead or bleeding out. He began to order his men into a nearby building which provided a good area to flank the enemy.

Now, he did not see the Spartans themselves, but the flashes coming from the building indicated their positions. Rex realized that they were pinned. He had to wait until the Death Watch advanced then he can cut them down as they moved to the building.

However, the Spartans are not pinned down, as they are led to believe. They are in fact, baiting the enemy, as the Death Watch slowly closed its forces on the building, and they failed to notice the giant metal men silently stalking the buildings surrounding their would-be attackers, ready to pounce on them.

However, Rex did see them, just before he was about to get into position. "Hold up." He ordered. Two of his men, then went to side, asking for orders. He then began to formulate a plan.

"Stand by, be ready to engage on my command." Rex gave his orders, and the rest of the Clones all chorused in affirmatives. He was gonna help the Spartans, but he held back, since apparently, they knew what they were doing. Seeing the positions of the Spartans, if they remain on the building adjacent to the building, he could crush the enemy with the Spartans on one side and the Clones on the other, and Rex began to hold his breath, waiting for the Spartans to fire first.

It did not take very long.

Suddenly 3 large figures erupted from the ruins of a nearby building and began to raise hell on the Death Watch, cutting down 1/3rd of the group in the initial ambush. The rest got their bearings and sought to use cover, but their backs were turned to the Clones.

"All units, engage!" Rex took his blasters and blasted two in the back, while the rest poured blue blaster fire on the enemy's back. The Death Watch was now panicking as they were now caught between the Spartans and the Clones. It did not take long to finish them off in the combined fire. Once the last enemy soldier fell to the ground, minus his head, the Spartans finally allowed themselves to ease up at the reinforcements.

Rex clearly saw the Spartans, but was astonished at their sheer height. They were colored olive drab green, with some having different insignias on their shoulder plates. All of them had the same golden visor helmet that showed only the reflection of the person looking at it. Rex swore that those helmets gave him some shudders as he was sure that if he fought against them, he would see his own reflection in there, dying while this giant stares him down.

There were 4 of them and the one in the middle approached the Clones.

Must be their leader. Rex thought.

"Sierra-117, Fireteam Blue." The green giant introduced himself, with one advanced silver rifle on his back and holding the Assault rifle in his hands. And his team began to designate themselves as 104, second in command and the one holding the battle rifle; 087, who was holding the shotgun, and 058, holding the sniper rifle and the one using an Assault rifle on her back as she jumped down from the house that was under attack earlier.

"Captain Rex, Torrent Company. Saw your group pinned, and moved to assist, but I think you got this well in hand." Rex said, gesturing to the carnage surrounding the two groups.

"Don't worry, we'll be sure to leave more for you next time." A female voice said, coming from the left of the leader, holding the shotgun. 087 seemed to be a bit twitchy for Rex.

"Well, onto other concerns," Rex began. "We were headed to the Royal Academy of Government just a few clicks north of this position so that we can rescue the students there. That place is a major outpost aside from the palace grounds itself, so resistance is heavy. Now, I know you guys have your own thing, but I was hoping to get some extra firepower to bear on those targets. Think you can help us out?" Rex asked.

Truthfully, while he had a briefing on Spartan history and their adherence to command structure, they were, through and through, a black-ops squad whose very existence bordered on missions like these to go behind enemy lines and ravage them before the main force could arrive. They were like Clone Commandos, but with larger armor, energy shielding and taller than them.

"This is Kal Skirata's op, so we are helping his forces in whatever way possible. We can assist in this, Captain." Sierra-117 replied, and then turned to his fellow Spartans. "087, you are on point. The re-" 117 was cut off when blaster fire pinged off a nearby table, forcing everyone to take cover as nearby enemy reinforcements began to pour in and laying suppressing fire as they brought heavy laser turrets and rockets to bear.

"Jessie, 12 o'clock! Take that turret out!" Rex yelled as blaster fire and gun fire began to drown out the sounds of the dying and the fires that were currently burning the city. He also began to order his men to suppress and some of his officers and best troopers to flank. Another enemy got too close with a rocket and fire on 058's position, taking out only her shields as 117 took him down with the Assault rifle.

Ne'tra Kad Shock Trooper Besk Vorp had been near the area and came in with two additional Ne'tra Kad Shock Troopers as they began flanking the enemy left and right, cornering the enemy. 117 took out his silver weapon and suddenly discharge a beam of energy that disintegrated a nearby Death Watch trooper, making the rest pause, as they marveled how the Terrans, with their penchant for using slug throwers, had a weapon that made the laser gun in his hands look primitive. Rex himself was amazed but took cover once more as enemy fire came close onto his position. More Clones came in and flanked the enemy as well.

The Enemy, while outnumbered and outflanked, was putting up fierce resistance as 5 Clones dropped dead and an additional 10 Clones ended

up injured and even nicked 058 in the arm, but it was minor and her shields came up soon after before more additional damage could be dealt. One of the Ne'tra Kad troopers was injured and soon he was pinned as some Death Watch advanced on his position.

Rex jumped over his cover and advanced, despite heavy cover as he used his twin blaster pistols to put down two of them before they switched their targets from the injured Mandalorian to the Clone Captain, and now he was trapped. Rex blindfired but he was pinned against heavy weapons fire. He knew this is one bind he might not get out off as the enemy closed in on his position while the others were being suppressed.

Suddenly, a blur rushed past the line and two of the enemy hit the floor, bleeding with another blasted to oblivion. Kelly, or Spartan 087, rushed to his aid and used her shotgun to down 3 more before she switched to her Warframe melee weapon and used the claymore setting to change her weapon into a Claymore and proceeded to cut down two enemies in one swing, while bringing her M9 Sub-Machine gun from her hip and began shooting and mincing the foe before her and her claymore in another taking down two more and maiming a third who was near them. Slowly but surely, they made progress.

Rex was impressed as he received new orders and began to push ahead with his men. This invasion may turn out better than he thought.

{South Side, Sudari Medical Ward, Roof}

Two Arc Troopers who accompanied Besk, ARC- 7789 Pinger and ARC-9966 Topsy, saw that and were amazed at her combat prowess. Their teacher, Besk Vorp, was impressive as their combat tactics are similar to his, but the way the Spartans moved made their old teacher look like a total FNG. "Sir," Topsy began. "We are made, we need to get out of here." He said, as they were located up on the rooftops trying to snipe the more threatening of the Death Watch to the invasion force. But the enemy took notice and began to fire rockets at their position.

Besk drew his blaster rifle. "I couldn't agree with you more. Let's get in there." And they used their jet packs to get into the action. As they touched down, the enemy noticed them and pandemonium reigned as Besk took his KiSteer 1284 Projectile Rifle and took out the Death Watch Trooper on the top of a building manning the heavy gun emplacement before using a DL-44 to deal with incoming threats, with his associates taking cover and giving their fellow soldier some cover fire. Topsy took a thermal detonator and threw it in a building filled with blaster fire and second later, it detonated and a Death Watch soldier flew into the air and onto the street to escape the blast radius, only to be cut down by Besk as he ordered them to move up towards Rex's position.

The battle intensified as more enemy reinforcements poured in. Despite advanced weaponry and superior numbers, the Death Watch Mandalorians did not back down as they gave everything they had and began to blast their enemies. Both the Rebel New Mandalorians and True Mandalorians banded together to take them down as their forces helped the Rogue Battalion retake it bit by bit. Besk then found another tall building and motioned for his men to retake it, with the help of a few more squads at his back.

It will be a long fight if they don't take out the head of the snake soon.

{Keldabe, Underground Catacombs, near Unidentified gateway}

A shot rang out and the soldier manning the gun emplacement went down, along with 12 other soldiers who were blasted or sniped by the Spartans as the combined might of the Spartan Fireteams as Napalm and Gospel began to raise hell.

Firebrand began to leap over the crates and began letting loose with her Assault Rifle filled with depleted uranium rounds as it tore through unarmored soldiers left and right, but found the more armor covered troopers a bit ineffective as some bounced off their armor, but was still not enough to stop all the bullets as two of them dropped like rocks. Titan got out of his hiding spot and used his experimental Typhoon SMG to mince multiple soldiers, armored or not, into small pieces. Tokyo took out her Scatter gun and began blasting away at nearby threats while the Spartan Snipers began to take out the officers and leaders and disorganized the enemy.

Despite that, some officers still survived and began to fight off the assault as they began throwing thermal detonators and sonic grenades at the Spartans, forcing them back a bit. Using their Slipspace modules, Voodoo, Gopher, Nova and Magician as they disappeared then reappeared behind the enemies and soon, 2/3rds of the enemy are now dead.

The remainder were able to regroup and soon they provided fierce resistance to all those unwelcome in the chamber. Firebrand had to admit, this was getting fierce.

Natasha Fleur "Filler" De Castro had to add her two cents in this. "You know, they kinda fight much more viciously than our ODSs." She commented.

Titan scoffed. "Are you kidding? I think we should take notes on how those boys should fight. Hell, even our Marines and Army boys should take some notes on how to fight like these guys."

Hannah "Nova" Novak put her foot down on this. "Cut the chatter, boys. We need to clear this before Kal's Commando group gets here. Clearing this place is only a job half done. We still need to check the contents of that structure first." She mentioned, and all chatter was gone, unless it was an order or if they pointed out high-priority threats.

Now, it was getting desperate as most of the surviving hostiles had heavy armor and heavy weaponry. But they pose no threat to Titan's Fuel Rod Cannon or Tokyo's Scattergun. It was a pure massacre and even with the heavy weaponry, they all fell down like dominos.

It took less than ten minutes, and by that time, the room had small fires, bullet holes, blood and even the smell of burnt bodies now permeated the atmosphere.

Signaling the all clear, Firebrand opened her comms and reported all clear in their end. "This is Firebrand. Objective Bravo is secure, standing by for new orders, over."

"Copy, Firebrand." The AI Rei responded. "I have received reports that some of Kal's Commandos are headed your way to investigate this area. You are to wait for them to rendezvous to your location before opening the Treasure Chest, How Copy?" Firebrand realized that Overlord no longer wanted to keep his cards hidden anymore.

"Solid Copy, Awaiting RV. Firebrand out." And she closed the link.

{Sundari, Royal Academy of Government, 60 minutes into the assault.}

The Royal Academy of Government was one of the first targets the Death Watch attacked when they took to power. They realized that such a place was where future rebels or political opponents could sprout up and oppose the Sith, so they immediately put their boot on it, desecrating it with Death Watch propaganda and executing the majority of the staff and civilians that were in the building at the time. The Death Watch and their Sith Master laughed at the horrors they inflicted on the populace as they turned it into a big torture building with the only function is to send an example to the populace.

Now, things have changed. The Clones were pushing back the Death Watch and the New Mandalorians fought with a fury that was matched by their predecessors, the True Mandalorians. It was brutal and at least one member of the New Mandalorian rebels have lost a friend or family member to that place alone. Now they shot anything that was wearing anything that bore the enemy's insignia.

Normally, Kal would have ordered to take prisoners, but he had heard reports of numerous Death Watch forces surrendering, only to use explosives hidden in their armor to take as many Clones with them as they could. And the few that did genuinely surrender brutally killed by the rebels as they were either paranoid of suicide bombers, or stricken with rage. So he decided to order a kill on sight command to alleviate this, with prisoners only to be taken if they can.

Now the building itself was riddled with blaster fire, with explosions shaking the ground around them. Aka'jor-class Shuttles that were taken by the rebels were used to fly in and take the wounded out of the battlefield, despite the rockets fired by Death Watch. Rex and his Spartan associates arrive as one of the shuttles blew up and crashed onto a nearby AT-TE, blowing it up as well.

"We have to take out those rockets on the roof!" Rex yelled as he began to take out his DL-44 blaster pistols and began to shoot at two enemy soldiers who were trying to set up a heavy turret, taking out one, but the other got the job done as he began to open fire and kill 6 Clones in a single volley before overheating.

Linda-058 took her sniper rifle and aimed for the ammunition stocks behind the soldier as she took the shot and blew the turret, the soldier, and two other enemy hostiles sky-high.

"We can get your guys up there." 117 said. "You'll have to be in physical contact for us to slipspace your boys up there."

"Will that even work?" Rex asked. "Or is it even safe for us? Because

your armor is tank grade compared to ours."

"The eggheads in R&D are pretty sure that this can work, although the maximum limit is about 4 guys per slipspace as it won't put a lot of strain into the module itself. And how it works is just too classified for you to know." 104 replied. Seeing one of the gunships getting shot down by another rocket, Rex needed to act fast.

"Alright, gents!" Rex began. "Pick your Spartan and lock and load." 3 Clones grabbed onto each Spartan as they began to activate their slipspace modules.

As they did the reappeared on the edge, surprising the enemy racketeers as the Spartan/Clone Team began to lay waste and soon all of them were dead with almost no resistance.

"Rex to Prosecutor, we have successfully taken out the AA rockets and you are now clear to land your shuttles and gunships, over."

"Copy that, Captain." A female voice responded. "The flyboys wanna extend their thanks for clearing the skies. We have secured 75% of Sundari. Take this and this battle is won. Commando Team Bacta is already touching down on your position. They are under your command for now, so take the Academy and rescue any hostages inside." She ordered.

True to her words, an LAAT gunship landed with a few heavily armed Clone Commandos arriving on his position. Rex nodded to their leader as he turned back to his comms.

"Consider it done." Rex cut the comms and ordered his men into position, with the Spartans taking another entrance into the building.

Inside, they found lots of dried blood that stuck to the walls and the ground as they treaded inside the building, with the Death Watch retreating deeper into the building. CC-6588 Mosaic, leader of Commando Team Bacta, took point as the hallways were desolate and devoid of hostiles. Though no one said anything, they had a lot on their minds. How could the Death Watch do this to their own people, the Mandalorians, even though they surrendered? It infuriated the Cuy'val Dar and the Ne'tra Kad to no end. Even the Clones were disgusted. And no one knew why they would do such a thing to their people.

But what they did know is that no one was leaving the building alive, aside from the hostages.

Meanwhile, Fireteam blue had switched to their upgraded Promethean vision modes, which allowed them to not only identify armed and unarmed targets, but can also pinpoint weak points in the structure or even plot alternate routes based on the situation. He saw the Clone team moving slowly, with another group of hostiles located just across their location ready to fire at the incoming Clones as soon as they moved further in the building. 117 wasted no time in contacting Rex.

"This is Sierra One-One-Seven. Be advised: 15 hostiles are on the floor you are in, 5 of those are in the room 3 meters to where you

are with about 6 hostages and one of them is barricading the door.¹⁰ of the others are in the room next to you, ready to ambush, I would highly suggest that you take caution. How Copy?" Rex had no idea how the Spartans got the information so fast, but he wasn't gonna complain something that could save his men's lives.

Rex replied. "We heard, thanks for the heads up, Sierra one-one-seven." HE relayed the information and then turned to an alternate route, making sure not to give out any indications that the ambush the Death Watch set up for them has been compromised.

They began to crouch as they began to double back to their entry point and began to move through a different hallway. Blaster fire was still echoing outside so it was clear the Death Watch was still defending this building for now. Rex had to move quickly or risk his fellow Clones being slaughtered in droves trying to retake the building.

He saw a Death Watch patrol, 6 men strong, roaming the hallways for potential infiltrators. Rex began to signal his men to lower their weapons and bring out their CQB weaponry, which consisted mainly of vibro blades and wrist blades. Slowly approaching the patrol, Rex took out the one dealing the rear, with his comrades quickly subduing and neutralizing the other five with speed. He saw there was another patrol and were too far away to intercept, even if they threw a vibro blade into their skulls. As they raised their guys to fire, the guns were suddenly yanked out of their hands, and were crushed right in front of them, stunning and horrifying the two soldiers as Fred and Kelly dematerialized behind them and slit their throats while kicking them in the back, crushing their spines.

Their bodies flew forwards and slid on the floor, their blood painting the blue and white floor beneath them as they came to a stop in front of the Clones.

Mosaic's sniper, CC-7554 Ruckus, whistled. "Those are some smooth moves." He commented. The rest of the Clones didn't say anything, but they were just as impressed. Soon, the two groups are now moving slowly in the corridors, getting into position to breach the wall behind the ambush party.

One new toy the UNSC had created was the Pulse Bomb. Studying the use of the Pulse Grenade yielded interesting results, and with help from Monitors they uncovered in a few Forerunner Ruins and Shield Worlds, they slowly began to reverse-engineer some weapons to work differently, like using a Pulse Grenade, find out how to make the yield stronger and the blast radius larger, resulting in the creation of the Type 090 Pulse Bomb.

Master Chief planted one such bomb and began to back away. Normally, he would have heard Cortana making a quip about this, but she was with Halsey trying to sort out a few files and was currently receiving a small upgrade to her memory chip.

He began to set the charge and told them to get away. Jessie began to quip something about how primitive their remote detonation charges are. John said nothing, as he would let the device prove him wrong.

Once they reached max distance, he activated it, and soon an orange

bright light blossomed, disintegrating the wall, and the 5 Death Watch in a spectacular show of light before it violently imploded, leaving the Clones and the Death Watch who watched the whole debacle stunned. The Spartans capitalized on this and their weapons flashed multiple times as all the hostiles were wasted to the last man, with the hostages now frightened for their lives.

Master Chief stood in through the now vaporized hole and the shadows that illuminated the dim room made the already imposing Spartan more intimidating than he looks. Some tried to scream through their bindings, as some had their mouths covered.

"Alright, we are here to get you people out, no need to panic." The Spartan said calmly. Immediately all the muffled screaming stopped. Clones came in and began to cut the bonds and led them onto the roof, where another group was waiting to extract the hostages. As they left, a young woman in her early 20's stopped to thank the Spartan, who replied "It's my job." She nodded and left.

Rex was slightly beginning to understand why they were regarded heroes. It was a shame that their own futures were taken away from them to be such powerful warriors. He respected him like his Jedi Generals before them.

Rex then regrouped and proceeded deeper in as multiple hostiles began to enter the floor and fighting began anew.

{Sundari Royal Palace}

The area surrounding the main government building was heavy fighting. Most of the Death Watch was stalling the Clones and their Mandalorian allies as they began to push towards the building. The brothers were trapped but they will take many of them down if they do. The UNSC expected them to do this, so they sent in their "Jedi".

"This is Chariot-One-One. Touchdown in 30 seconds." The pilot of a cloaked Pelican announced as it's two passengers began to steel themselves to take them out.

Agents Offee and Ventress loaded their utility belts. Aside from the Warframe and Lightsaber, they also had Hardlight shield modules and Cloak Modules as their weapons as they began to embark on their assassination mission to kill the Sith. Ventress loaded her magnum and kept it later for emergency use, as Offee activated her Eclipse cloak module to check its use. She deactivated it as soon as she was satisfied. The Pelican landed in a small empty space just 500 meters from the Royal palace.

As they touched down, two Fireteams of Lost Legion, Crimson and Royal, led by Overlord, greeted the CBMI agents. "Welcome to Mandalore, ma'am."

They greeted each other briefly, as they went straight to business. Overlord spoke first. "The levels leading up to the main throne room are heavily guarded and booby-trapped. The AI disabled some of these, but there are manual traps as well."

"How should we proceed then?" Barriss asked.

"We split up. Royal and I will provide the distraction and weaken

defenses for the rest of the army to pass, while Crimson escorts you to the targets."

"Anything sounds good as long as it leads to them." Ventress agreed.

"Alright, ma'am, wait for my signal then strike. Good luck to you." And soon Royal and Overlord used their slipspace modules to teleport themselves into position.

Barriss took charge. "Gentlemen, let's go kill a king and his prince."

****Secondary Story: **Self-Encouragment**

{Glinn's Field, Dr. Schofield's Office, 5 days after birth of Twins.}

Glenda Schofield has had a rather eventful month, with not a single break for her in sight. Truthfully, she did not care. She had been busy helping the Jedi Masters, Knights and the various Padawans to work through their issues and their traumas. Every day, she seemed to help at least 3 out of 4 Jedi who enter her office almost instantly, with the rest coming back since some scars last longer than others.

She had many multiple sessions with the Jedi, yet her most interesting and traumatic was Anakin Skywalker, a Jedi Knight with a history of violence and emotional baggage long before the Clone Wars began. She would see him almost every day, but the visits are getting less and less with each passing session. Eventually, she had seen him at least once a week now.

Now, she had a feeling that this might be the last time she might see him for some time. He had a family and most of his issues have been worked out.

As he began to drone on about his current problems, Glenda had noticed a pattern in his speech that was irregular: For one thing, he was droning on about other things aside from his current topic, with one topic going from one area to the next.

Glenda held her hand up to stop him from rambling on as she took her glasses off and asked him seriously.

"Master Skywalker, I know of those issues a long time ago and we already worked them out. You are stalling for something Skywalker, so please, spit it out?" She asked bluntly. She had to be hard on her patients sometimes, especially warriors as they tended to be hard-headed than most.

Skywalker looked into her eyes and said. "I'm scared, Miss Schofield, and not just because of my duties and responsibility as a Jedi, but mostly the duties and responsibilities as a parent." He admitted.

"Go on."

"I've been told a few times that I'm the "Chosen One." He emphasized the title. "The man who would bring balance to the Force and bring

peace and unity within the Republic and in extension the Jedi as well, but now look at what it has become now. It is now ruled by the Sith, it's people are being oppressed and they all blame the Jedi for it all, with the Jedi now exiled to a foreign power whose strength is greater than ours, and we are now its inhabitants. And now I am a father to two young twins, with a mother whose will is stronger than mine. I should be excited at the prospect of raising them, but in light of all my failures now, how can I? How can I raise my children in despite all that?" He asked.

Glenda looked at Anakin with a sympathetic face. She has faced multiple patients of the same nature: Soldiers facing a dilemma as they believe themselves unworthy or unfit to raise a parent due to their own nature as a person who takes people's lives.

"Master Skywalker, I have to be honest with you. Why is it that you feel this unfit when the people around you say differently?"

"Excuse me?"

"For one thing; you broke your Jedi Code, one that prohibits relationships such as yours to exist. Yet here you are, having children and becoming a shining beacon for other Jedi to follow you. I've seen couples with Jedi wrapped in another's arms. I've seen them ask their hands in marriages, and do you know who they want to thank the person responsible? You, Master Skywalker." She stated.

"Our home is in shambles and most of our Jedi died in the Temple, with my "best friend" Palpatine is responsible for killing off more than 2,000 Jedi across the Republic by their own troops."

Glenda decided to give him a fact. "And are you sure you are the only one who feels that way?"

"I'm the only Jedi who feels that way and feels it could happen again to his children, if that's what you are asking."

Glenda took a breath. "Anakin, every single patient who came in here blame themselves, but the most, if not all of them, blame the Council for it."

Anakin's eyes widened. "Why blame them? They did what the Code told them to do, and they don't act without proper reason."

"That's the problem: There was a lot of inaction before we came along. Their very Code confined them with a sense of deadness you would see in a computer. They hated the Code's strict upbringing when you came along, and now in conflagrated to a point where that very same Code was used against them by Palpatine himself. And the Council members themselves? They blame themselves for putting them in that position, for taking a gift horse in the mouth and almost getting the Jedi killed for it by trusting the Chancellor in the first place."

"So if you think are the one at fault here, I'm giving you a reality check: You ARE NOT AT FAULT FOR EVERYTHING. Chosen one or not, it is bullshit to believe you could have possibly seen that coming."

Glenda then decided to do something for him to get it through to his

skull.

"Well, if you feel unconvinced, follow me." She said, standing up as she went and walked towards a terminal with a monitor as the center piece. Anakin looked at it. "What is it? A Security interface Terminal?"

"Something like that, but the cameras are wired to the outside, overlooking the cliffs. I had that installed so I could see the sunset without leaving the office. I wanted to put my office there in the first place but it was all taken by some military bigwig." Dr. Schofield explained. "This also inadvertently also covers the balconies, or as I like to call them "lover's refuge" due to the number of romantic escapades here. Let me show you." She switched the video on and Anakin saw something he never expected.

He saw his apprentice, Ahsoka Tano, being a bit too friendly with a young man that doesn't even remotely look like military. How Ahsoka got him inside, is beyond him, since he knew that the UNSC never allows common civilians inside a military base unless he/she has family in the military or is a civilian liason. Part of Anakin is outraged that his former apprentice is being oogled and another part of him is whispering "blackmail" when he asks her a favor. Then the two hug each other and kiss, both shocking and amusing Anakin, who was rather surprised that his apprentice is already intimate with a young man she has yet to introduce to.

"His name is Rory Sato, a 17 year old boy living with a family in New Plymouth. They run a small business downtown and he and young Tano met when she and the other Padawans took a tour of the city some time ago." She explained, after some reports from her contacts in the city told her of the encounter. "She was able to convince some of the brass to allow him to visit her, but I have no idea how she convinced them to get that boy in a military installation."

Anakin had a sneaking suspicion it involved a certain small green Jedi Grand Master.

Anakin looked a bit frustrated, but Glenda could tell he was slightly happy for her. "She and I are gonna have a rather nice chat later on." Glenda chuckled at Anakin's semi-angry statement.

"You say you're afraid to be a father because of your failures? If this is all a failure," She gestured to the couple on the screen. "Then I say you should make more failures."

Anakin chuckled at her attempt to make him feel better, which is beginning to work. Glenda pushed on.

"Now, I am not claiming to be the foremost expert on how the Jedi should be, but I know when a person is hurting, and I know there is no evil in letting it all out." She said softly this time. "And we all have to face a moment in our lives when we get kicked down, we get back up."

"And that brings us back to the children. Whether or not you will accept the fact you lost your home is completely up to you. To them, what they have now is what they will cherish and remember, not the blood and the tears you shed in the past. They will need someone to raise and help them get through life as a normal person, to make them

forge their own way through the stars. This is their home now, as is yours. We in the UNSC know how much you've lost, and compared to our sufferings, yours are simple wounds you can patch up and heal." Glenda proclaimed. She continued on.

"I know this will never be easy for you, but life is like that. Your children's upbringing will not depend on your failures, Master Skywalker. It will depend on the successes of today, and the mistakes learned from the past will be used to give them a childhood you've always wanted for yourself. Your mother did not want a perfect Jedi, she wanted a very good son who knew that he loved her too and that she can have that love be given to your family and the generations after them." She paused as she took a deep breath.

"I've said my piece. But keep this in mind: The only true easy day, was yesterday. Tomorrow will always be the hardest. Those children may need a strong hand to guide them through it."

Anakin looked at the scene of love between his master and his lady friend. She was right; he has given the Jedi something stronger than just their conviction in the Force and the Republic. He had given them a chance to truly connect with the people in a meaningful way. He should have known about that by now, but Dr. Schofield drove it home for him.

"Thanks, Doc. No wonder they called you the best. I needed to hear that." Anakin said.

"It's my job. As a famous Spartan once said: We don't to obtain a reward for doing a job that is expected of you," I took it to heart. And I hope you take this to heart when being a father, Anakin. The lessons you learn now, can be passed on for future generations to come."

Anakin smiled. He felt better now, and wondered if she had a family of her own. "Do you have a family, Miss Schofield?"

Glenda shook her head. "I have not found a time or place outside my work, Master Skywalker. And before you even ask, I appreciate your offer, but I have much to do for today."

Skywalker took none of it, however. "Look, you did so much for me in return for nothing. But I choose to give something back in return. I'm no soldier, I'm a Jedi, remember?"

"You won't take no for an answer, will you Skywalker?" Glenda asked, as Anakin shook his head.

"Fine, I suppose I can come along for now." Smiling, Anakin waited for Glenda to walk and she came with her hair braided up and her glasses kept in her left breast pocket. She was smiling. "I hope your idea of lunch isn't from the barracks."

"No, nonsense. I ordered something you Terrans called pizza. Some of your Terrans called it a masterpiece, but those were the soldiers talking, what do you think?" He asked as Glenda locked her office behind them and began walking away.

Glenda laughed slightly, realizing that Anakin doesn't really know what it is. "Okay, I'll tell you. Picture bread that is flattened

and-"Her voice became distant as they moved towards the barracks where Padme was resting with Anakin at the moment.

OK, I hope this was nice for you guys. About Ahsoka and OC Rory Sato, we will go for that story in a future secondary story for later. Next chapter is extensive as it explains why the Forerunners were so interested in Mandalore and we see some Regicide in the next chapter.

12. Episode 12

Okay, sorry for the delay because I have been playing these games recently:

XCOM Enemy Within

Assassins Creed: Black Flag

WarFrame

DOTA 2

Skyrim

Sorry for the delays, but I will get this one cranked out now. I hope you like this. I'm a gamer. Happy Holidays to you all.

And I want to thank fellow Author Crazy-Man for his contribution for the Guardians. You will know who they are later.

And no, I don't own Halo or Star Wars.

**Episode 12: **Regicide.

{Sundari, Royal Palace, Throne Room.}

Maul overlooked the city in the balcony of the royal palace, observing his remaining troops fortifying the defenses. He knew that they will not hold, and he also knew that the Keldabe dig site when silent just as the attack started. He knew if they did not check in after 30 minutes, then he knew that something was not right. Even as this blasted invasion started, he would have been informed on the status of the Keldabe dig site that had been a secret and only shared with his top lieutenants.

Ever since he stumbled onto that mysterious silver door that he and his brother found during their time hiding under Keldabe's catacombs, he knew that whatever was on the back of it was going to change the galaxy forever. He had that feeling, one shared by his brother and the top leaders of the Death Watch that he controlled.

Now, it seems that everything was falling into pieces, a sentiment shared by his brother, Savage Oppress. He was surveying the scene when reports of large, armored droids came and slaughtered their men like cattle. While Savage was not familiar with the term "Spartan", he researched on the topic. IF they were indeed involved, then defeat was now a certainty.

"Brother, our forces are faltering, our control over this planet is

slipping. We cannot hold out against the Ne'tra Kad and their Clone lackeys, not to mention their UNSC war hounds. We will not survive this unless we leave now." Savage said, overlooking the wartorn Sundari city as he saw the fighting of the city inching closer, if the blaster bolts coloring a nearby street that was not so far from their high and mighty fortress.

For years, they ruled with an iron fist. Their rule over Mandalore is a prime example of what would happen if the Sith ever ruled the galaxy. Segregation, genocide, torture, and more inhumane acts were committed to keeping the local populace under control. All undone now, thanks to the UNSC. Ne'tra Kad could never launch this large scale invasion on their lonesome.

And the former rulers, the New Mandalorians, banded together with small remnants of the True Mandalorians, and now all their inhabitants of the planet not under their control wanted whoever was associated with the Sith and the Death Watch on a pike.

Maul did not like a retreat, but unless he did so now, it was certain doom for them.

"What of our surprise?" Savage asked his brother. They had been creating a last resort to give a pyrrhic victory over their foes: A bomb, strong enough to take out half the planet in its extreme power. They held the codes, and as soon as they realized this battle were truly lost, if it wasn't already obvious to Maul, then he would activate it and leave the planet to die via catastrophic explosion.

"We activate it. And as soon as we reach our way to the other side of this Force-forsaken planet, we can activate it and use the horrendous aftermath of it to escape in the confusion." Maul explained, confident in his plans. "And we hold the only deactivation codes for the device, so even if they did reach here, it would not be enough time to take the bomb out."

His brother did not share his sentiment, however. "I can sense Ventress on this rock, in this very city. We will never get away clean, even with your plan."

Maul was still overconfident to not see the threat, despite signs of everything that was an omen of the things to come for them. The Dark Side does blind all, even common sense.

"They are of no concern to me. We focus on the plan, my brother, so prepare to abandon this rock." Maul said, unconcerned the incoming threats.

{Sundari Royal Palace, Meanwhile}

It had been a long slog towards the end, but now the majority of the Death Watch has been finally pushed back to the last defense in the city: The Royal Palace. Traps, turrets, mines, and all sorts of heavy ordinance are being hurriedly set up, but were being hampered as advance forces harassed the defenders, as their enemies advanced faster than expected. Either by surrender or by death, Death Watch was losing at a ratio of 5 men per 1 Clone/Ne'tra Kad Trooper in their battles.

In the midst of this chaos, CBMI agents Offee and Ventress met with Spartan IV Fireteams Crimson and Royal and infiltrated the Royal Palace successfully, with Royal, led by Overlord, providing the distraction, weakening the defenses and softening the target for their allies, as Crimson provided escort for the two Agents towards their main targets. Resistance was fierce, and most Death Watch tried to suicide bomb in desperation. Despicable as they are, no one questions the dedication of the troopers stationed in the palace. Some of the greener soldiers surrendered, but the rest were gunned down to the last man.

Eventually they entered the main Throne Room, where a very unpleasant surprise awaited them.

In the middle of the room, and on the Throne that Duchess Satine was sitting on when she was ruling Mandalore, was a large bomb.

"Shit." Ventress swore softly as Wren came over to check the device.

"This is one nasty bomb, a fusion bomb to be precise. This is set to explode in 30 minutes." She said.

"Can you disarm it?" Offee asked. Wren frowned slightly. "I can, but it might take too long. I can speed that up if you can get the activation codes. And I think we know who has them." Wren suggested. Ventress grimaced. "Fine, but if they hold out on us, their deaths are going to be slow rather than quick if they resist."

Her partner shook her head. "Reign them in, Asajj. We have to find them first." She said as she scanned the room for anything out of the ordinary. She eventually came across a secret panel that activates a secret access tunnel that runs under the city to a secret transport terminal that connects from Sundari to Keldabe to 10 different locations. During Satine's reign, she built them during the Clone Wars and she used them when the Sith came to town. Now it was used to get the Sith out of a situation Satine herself was in a year and 2 months ago.

Lady took no chances. "Wren, Wrecker and I will stay with the bomb. The rest of you are coming with the CBMI and assist in tracking down the targets and-" She was cut off as she barely dodged a laser bolt that came from the door as reinforcements that managed to bypass Fireteam Royal and began to open fire on the Spartans as the rest fired back.

"Go!" Lady said as she dropped two more Death Watch Troopers. Offee and Ventress nodded as the two CBMI agents were escorted by Maverick and Lightning as they entered the escape tunnel in pursuit. She then used her TACPAD to map out the schematics. Four blue dots indicated their position, and as the schematic expanded, lots of red dots began to fill her view.

"They have escorts and a good lead on us, so we aren't stopping for anything." Offee pointed out. No words needed to be said.

Everyone cloaked and soon, the tunnel was empty, save for the telling sound of rapid taps of boots stomping the ground.

{Keldabe, Undisclosed location in the Catacombs.}

Clone Commando Darman has seen a lot in his service with the Republic. Corrupt officials, Biological Weapon caches, even the ancient ruins of civilization in planets controlled by the CIS, but nothing prepared him and his team for the "surprise" the Spartan Fireteam unveiled to them. Omega and Bacta came in as they walked into a large empty area with so many dead bodies and a large door, surrounded by the Spartans.

After being given a brief insight as to what the Forerunners were, Fireteam Napalm leader Firebrand gave the main reason as to why they came to Mandalore: To investigate and activate the Forerunner device that laid under the former capital of Mandalore. With Kal attending this via hologram, the Commandos and their leader were rather stunned that such a powerful and ancient race built something under the homeworld of the Mandalorians. Corr of Omega Squad asked why this did not activate when Maul's Death Watch were not able to activate the device, it was because they lacked the proper activation device, and without it, they would be unable to access the structure itself. Firebrand then explained to them that all their efforts of retaking the world would cover up their Forerunner ruin under the sands of Mandalore.

Firebrand activated the device, as it slowly activated the large door as it suddenly shifted and changed, revealing a hallway behind the entrance.

"Well, I'll be damned." Darman muttered. "Looks like Kal's home had more hidden doors than we thought."

"Well, we still need to know what's inside. One of our Spartan Fireteams will defend the entrance, while the rest of us head inside." Firebrand said.

"Well, that is acceptable." Darman agreed, since he and his brothers are curious what is inside.

Fireteam Napalm led Bacta and Omega inside, as the other Fireteam took positions to defend the area.

{Tunnel 6-A, At the same time.}

Lightning and Maverick found heavy resistance on their way to the Tunnels that lead into the escape platform that would take the Sith to a secret facility that lead towards somewhere that would take the Sith far away from here. The AI were working furiously to find out the location of that area, but for now, the CBMI agents were gonna take the slack and take the Sith down before they get out.

So far, they saw only a few turrets and hostiles, but intercepted enemy transmission told them that more reinforcements were on their way, so they had to move fast or the enemy will bog them down long enough for the Sith to escape.

More and more Mandalorians came in, and more met their deaths by either projectile based weaponry, advanced energy weapon discharge, or, if they got too close to the CBMI, lightsaber and Hardlight hack and slash tactics that sliced and diced the foes in a manner that would have made any sushi chefs jealous if they saw them.

They then reached a large area that had a large transit train hooked to anti-grav boosters, leading into a large tunnel that is assumed to be the escape tunnel that led to the shuttles that will take them away from the planet at large.

And they saw their primary targets boarding it.

Lightning wasted no time. "Targets sighted." He said, and numerous red bolts began to head on their positions.

Maverick began to snipe as Lightning opened fire on the nearest 3 hostiles. "We'll cover your advance, and delay these guys. Go!" He yelled over the hostile firepower began brought down on the group as Offee and Ventress activated their speed modules in their suits and using the Force to increase their already enhanced speed to catch to the escaping craft just as it was about to leave.

Maverick and Lightning then raised hell as they used their slipspace modules to teleport from one vantage point to another, with Maverick taking down the threats from afar and Lightning taking out anyone foolish enough to approach their postions.

10 minutes later, the entire area was now filled with corpses, body parts and the occasional ash pile. Then, they found an extra grav transport and used it to catch up to their CBMI superiors.

{Sundari, Escape Tunnel, on unidentified grav transport}

"Looks like they brought their lackeys to slow us down." Ventress remarked as another blaster shot pinged off her Hardlight shield. Both her and Barriss were swarmed as soon as they entered the lift. Their targets were in the small cabin in the front of the train-like transport, but between them and the Sith were hoards of hostiles trying to swarm the intruders. No such luck.

Bodies were thrown from the transport, whether it came from being Force pushed, slashed, or shot by Ventress' Magnum. Barriss used no guns as she simply wailed on the foe, slicing and dicing at her foes. Ventress was mixing it up, shooting with her Magnum and using her hardlight sword to cut through her foes and then perforating her foes, not necessarily in that order.

Eventually they finally reached their target as Ventress blew the grey matter off one Mandalorian and Offee decapitated his partner. They ripped the door off using the Force and threw the dessicated remains of the door out the back. They found the Sith waiting for them. Maul sat in the middle, with minimal light, as his brother stood behind him, forming dual sabers in his hands.

"Well, well, well. Would you look at that? A Jedi and a Sith fighting side-by-side?" Maul laughed, as if the concept was totally a complete joke to him. "Dooku must be turning in his grave if that was the case. He taught you better, Ventress."

"He taught me how utterly deceptive and backstabbing you lot are. I intend to scour you from the face of the galaxy. And you, Savage," Ventress snarled. "I did not forget your betrayal. I will end you as well as your brother."

"You are weak, Ventress. Under my new master, "Savage gestured to his

brother. "I have become stronger."

"Yes, strong enough to wield those blades, I imagine." Ventress quipped, despite the growing rage of Savage. "I suspect he feeds you enough dog food to make you a decent swordsman, let alone a Sith."

Savage raged, but his brother calmed him down, seeing through the ruse. "I admire your bravado, but it is time for you to die now."

Barriss then decided to talk, choosing her choice words correctly. "Yes, I agree. You first." And then she and Ventress used their Force powers to take out all light sources in the carriage. Maul and Savage shielded their eyes from the shattering glass that surrounded them. When they finally recovered, the CBMI agents were gone. Both brothers wielded their weapons, readying themselves and using the Force to help them locate the threats.

Unfortunately, as they did so, they did not notice Barriss and Ventress taking positions opposite one another on each end of the carriage, waiting for them to step over a small concussion mine they planted in their place as they stepped on it, and disorientated both men as Ventress and Offee Force-pushed the two Sith to each other, Savage to Ventress and Offee to Maul. The brothers recovered and soon battle was joined.

Lightsabers, Hardlight weaponry, and thrown objects, ranging from a table to a dead Mandalorian, were everywhere, and between the insanity done here and the moving transport, the tunnel had literally lit up. The pairs were separated from each other, with Maul and Barriss moving towards the front and Savage and Asajj going at it towards the rear of the transports. It was going to be a long fight. Maul and Barriss are now inside a car, with the makings of a small living quarters inside.

Maul sidestepped Barriss in an attempt to give a glancing blow, with Barriss using her left handed hardlight Katana to block it as Maul brought his other blade to bear on the CBMI, who dodged underneath and activated a small device on her palm, and in turn, made a small mine activate behind Maul, who did not sense it fast enough to get away as its incendiary payload burned his robes and some of his skin.

Barriss smirked. "Always be mindful of your surroundings."

Maul snarled and launched his own counter-attack, delivering a flurry of attacks and used his Force powers to grab a table behind her and smash it behind her, and she barely dodged it as it clipped the back of her head. Barriss groaned a bit and Maul was allowed a small breather, while looking down on her. "Good advice." Catching his breath, he pounced and the two resumed their duel, slicing furniture in their wake.

Meanwhile, Asajj threw a plasma grenade as Savage caught it with his mind, before it detonated prematurely and burned him slightly as he was blown back towards the rear even further. He underestimate Asajj's questionable tactics with her lightsaber skills, like mixing her lightsaber strikes with her using her magnum to wound Savage when he was caught off guard by the weapon. Truly, Asajj is more

unpredictable now than she was before all those years ago. Savage decides to up the ante by smashing multiple glass windows and using his powers to fling it to her with the speed of a machine gun. Asajj saw this and activated her hardlight shield, as Savage used the cover to advance rapidly on her position.

As the battle raged inside the tunnels, above the ground, the war was over. Many surrendered, and the New/True Mandalorians began to take control, with the UNSC Spartans and Ne'tra Kad troopers began to advance towards the secret docks that held the final resistance and the escape shuttles of the Sith overlords who ruled the planet.

Meanwhile, Kal Skirata and the majority of Ne'tra Kad commanders who acted as his bodyguards were now en route to the location of his Clone Commando teams who were with two Lost Legion Spartan Fireteams, as he wanted to know what a civilizations as advanced as the Forerunners would want with his planet.

{Keldabe, Meanwhile}

"Unreal." Fi said as he and his team came inside the structure, not believing of the ruins inside.

But ruins did not do justice to it. It looked like it was still brand new, with only a few sections of the wall missing. The entire thing was silver, with orange energy pulsating in the area, with the majority of area bathed in an unnatural blue light. It was utterly alien, more than anything the Clone saw in their lifetimes.

"And you say that most of your tech is based off these Forerunners?" Corr asked, as Firebrand nodded. Darman was actually shuddering how such a race, who could build such elegant structures, could disappear from the face of the galaxy and still leave a lasting impact on the Terrans, and now, the Mandalorians.

He, along with the rest of his brothers, were only given the summarized version of the Forerunners, but they did not know about the extensive part of it, such as the Ancient Human-Forerunner War, and their Flood problems. Only Kal Skirata was given the main story, but even then, it was limited.

Right now, though, whatever limited knowledge they had on the subject matter was blown up for them proportionally.

The area was large the layout was confusing, and if they went in without the Spartans, they would most certainly be lost. "This place would have made Palpatine jealous." Fi remarked.

Firebrand snorted. "I doubt that whatever he could cook up will be better than this. Besides, our spies got a lot of stuff from his database. For a strong military force, their cyber defense has more holes than swiss cheese."

"Swiss cheese?" Corr asked. Firebrand was about to explain as her TACPAD began to emit a beeping sound. "We have arrived." Firebrand proclaimed as she began to tap more commands on her TACPAD.

"Give me a few minutes for this. I am gonna activate the thing using the Forerunner codes I obtained from the eggheads back over in the

Milky Way. Not much, but it beats being perforated or vaporized by the defenses."

"Why would the defenses turn on you? I don't know a lot about this, but ain't this Forerunner stuff supposed to be keyed in with your DNA?" Darman asked. Firebrand shrugged. "That was only for our galaxy, Darman." She said. "We found this out of a small cache of data found in one of the ruins back in the Milky Way, and even then we have to tread carefully. Not all Forerunners liked us humans from being the successors of the Mantle. SO DO NOT TOUCH ANYTHING" She warned, which everyone agreed and began to wait for her work to be done.

{Escape Tunnel, with Ventress and Offee}

The battle was getting intense, and escalating more and more as the Sith threw everything at their foes. Maul quickly learned not to underestimate the Jedi has-been Offee as she nearly chopped his wrist off when he tried to do a feint. Now he was trying to find weaknesses in her defenses as she was currently throwing objects that either weighed 5 times more than her weight or can explode at the Sith, leaving small cuts on his body with some bruises to top it off.

Meanwhile, Ventress and Oppress were smashing into each other with enough Force to cut through 5 Warthogs in a line. Their swordsmanship literally all but annihilated the room they fought in, as it bore all sorts of weld marks that made it unstable and forced the combatants out of there as they continued going towards the front from the back.

The only thing each fight had going similar for the three Force users was that it was very equal, and each countering the other's attack. All four combatants knew this.

Maul was beginning to think that he underestimated his opponent, and began to step up his game. He increased his power behind his swings as he smashed his blades. "I grow tired of this." And he struck with vigor. He still believed this battle could still be won.

Barriss struggled as she felt that it became even more difficult to block his attacks. He had the rage, but he was also impatient. She had to hold him out long enough for him to make a mistake. And he did as he swings his lightsaber in a wide arc which she dodges, only for him to charge in order to gain the upper hand and hopefully cut her head off. Barriss sidestepped and activated her hardlight shield to bash him in. The universe rewarded her actions with a snapping sound of a broken bone. Maul screamed in agony as his right arm is snapped like a twig. "And you became too rash." Barriss countered her opponent's earlier remark.

Barriss put her power and used her abilities in the Force to increase the power in using her Hardlight Shield. She took advantage of his impatience. "Clearly, your throne blinded you to the basic rules of combat. One of which was to never, ever underestimate your opponent." Maul used his good arm to Force Throw a couch at her, and she cut it in half easily, but took advantage of the distraction to move away and find a place to hide and recuperate his wounds, and then ambushing her when she least expected it. Barriss took off in pursuit but as soon as she entered the next car, he was nowhere to be

found.

Barriss knew that he will try to heal up and get the jump on her, so she treaded carefully and headed to the top of the mag cars, because if she stayed to the indoors of the transport, it would be all the more likely to be caught in a trap of Maul's making. Better she take the higher ground. Activating her TACPAD, she began to scan the cars as she made her way to the front.

Meanwhile, Maul had reached the foremost front car and began to brace his arm and set it back again in place. He took the lull of the combat to his advantage, thinking of a new strategy to take her down. No longer did he regard her as a pest, but now as a true threat that nearly rivals that of Obi-Wan. He knew that if he did not take this girl down, she would find a way to bring him down. He no longer had any illusions that her Jedi morals will not stop her from flaying him alive.

Maul could see out of the corner that a strange blue light passed through the mag car he just left and realized she was sniffing him out. Smart girl. He deduced that it was coming from the roofs of the mag cars judging on the direction of the blue light that came shining downwards. She truly was not taking any chances. He had to admire her preparedness and clever tactics. But he was still the stronger one, no matter how wounded he was.

Barriss slowly stalked her prey, making sure she was in a position where she can see or feel that an ambush or trap can be seen clearly. She was just about to head out to the forward again when she felt a surge of alarm through the Force. She immediately back flipped just in time to see Maul smash through the ceiling and if she had been standing there for one second later, she would have been sliced in half.

"Exemplary Reflexes, girl," He scoffed. "But they still will not save you in the end."

"You are still too arrogant to proclaim yourself anything but a weak fish trying to outsmart a shark." She replied, to which Maul was confused on what she was referencing. "What?" She smirked and used her confusion to the advantage.

One of the things she learned while under the employ of the CBMI is that people are easily confused with things they don't understand, and that anything to throw the enemy off balance is permitted, whether it is using a new gun, explosive, gadget, or even psychological warfare. They even said that using phrases that throw the enemy off and giving them the upper hand.

Maul was confused for a split second when Barriss took the confusion to her advantage and used all her strength and Force abilities to propel a thermal detonator at Maul, who made the mistake of trying to counter her banter by standing like a fool.

The detonator was thrown at his face, but Maul managed to used his Force abilities to push himself away from the detonator, but it barely saved him. The heat and shrapnel traveled quickly to puncture through Maul's clothing and armor and found his flesh, already wounding an already wounded Sith. Barriss looked on as she approached her pray.

Meanwhile, with Savage and Ventress, they were still going at it, with anger and frustration building up between the two as their bloody history between each other fueling their blows as Ventress wants payback against Savage for betraying her, with Savage wanting to kill Ventress for her simply using him as a tool.

Now, they were reaching their limits as they realized they had to finish fast, before the other one gets lucky.

Savage used his Force powers to throw debris at her, and she cuts them in half and he pounces just as soon as he launched the second debris at her foe, trying to end this. Ventress screamed as she was bisected at the waist and fell in two neat pieces. Savage grinned as she finally put an end to her once and for all. "It seems I am the better Sith after all."

As he turned however, joy turned to shock as he realized that the "body" of Ventress shimmered and fizzed. It seems that she was able to somehow switch places with a decoy and gave him the false sense of victory. He did not ponder for long how this had transpired as a colored blade pierced his chest.

"You were just too overconfident." Ventress whispered as she decloaked from her position.

"H-how?" Savage coughed. "I-I would-d have -ssensed you."

"I had many months to train my ability to hide my presence in the Force. I did not do so earlier so that you would know who was coming to greet your doom. In the end, your arrogance caused your death, Savage, and retribution is at last, mine." She hissed before she used her other blade to decapitate the Sith. She took a moment to look at her quarry before she went to the front to assist her partner. Thinking about her victory later, she moved with haste as she knew that Maul will now try everything in his power to kill Barriss, and she knew an angry Sith is a lethal one, not to be trifled with.

Maul sensed his brother's death in the Force. And his face was going from shock, to pure unadulterated anger as he unleashed his anger through the Force, catching Barriss offguard and throwing a good distance back to the rear, breaking a few ribs and her left wrist in the process.

She was disoriented and her head was screaming pain in her and it took all her will not to scream in agony as the Sith landed in front of her, his signature dual bladed lightsaber already making his features look feral and intimidating to his already fierce expression of anger painted on his face.

"I was going to relish cutting your head off Jedi," he said as he twirled his blades in her direction like a fast moving buzzsaw. "Now, you are going to beg for a quick death."

Barriss tried to reach for her saber which has fallen to her left, only to have her left hand cut off and rewarding Maul with an ear splitting shriek of pain. She recovered with as much haste as she could but as she stood up, Maul did not let up as she cut her on the legs and soon she was on her back, facing the angry Sith as she felt a crushing sensation on her throat, but she did not see him lifting a

finger to reach at her. She then felt herself being lifted up.

Maul decided to toy with her a bit, extending her suffering before he made her truly beg. She was choking and she felt more force being put on her throat. She believed that her neck was so close to snapping at the moment.

"Any last words?" He mocked, feeling good as he felt the end close at hand. Well, he was about to.

Ventress bursted in and firing her magnum, making him drop Barriss and even catching a round in the shoulder. Barriss hacked and coughed as Ventress came over. "Don't worry I got this. You rest now." Ventress said, and Barriss nodded tiredly and moved herself to rest and heal up as much as she can while her partner takes on the Sith on in a heated duel.

"Why don't you pick someone who can fight you with both hands attached, Maul. Your brother had a good head in comparison to yours." She taunted, and he took the bait like a bull looking at a red cloth. And he charged with a fury unseen by many. Ventress then engaged him and pushed at him, away from her partner.

They went at it, back and forth, with no end in sight. But for Barriss, she kept coming in and out of consciousness, fighting the shock of losing her left hand and began to go through her memories as the shock and dizziness took her out of her consciousness and began to go through her memories.

Memories of her fighting alongside a Besalisk Jedi General, his fall, his madness his hatred, and her suffering all enduring and leaving an indelible mark on her soul poured into her mind; her memories of faking her death, meeting Ventress, their uneasy alliance turning into full partnership and actual friendship formed by the two. Both came from two opposite spectrums of the Force, both disillusioned and both working with a faction who knows the difference between good and evil, and walking the fine line between the light and dark sides to balance the darkness that crept over the galaxy, all to ensure the peace and stop the conflict from involving the Terrans, even though Ventress and her joined for different reasons.

She came to see her old Master, her friends, Ahsoka, and even the acquaintance of Dennis, the Spartan IV who she enjoyed to talk to. She saw them all dead, she saw them dying, she saw them in all sorts of pain, and she saw a dark shadow coming to swallow everything good and then nothing.

She woke up with a jolt, still laying against the wall. She did not know how long she was out, but judging by the lightsaber sounds echoing in the area, it probably wasn't for a while. She did not know what to make of that scene, but she knew that she will not Sidious win, and she will not certainly not die here. She saw her hand and began to tie a tourniquet to cover it. She can have it flash cloned again so she can have her hand back, but for now she will deal with Maul. She never leaves the job half-done, as her associated from CBMI, especially Roberts, drilled that statement into her head. She shakily stood up and called her WarFrame, which shaped itself into a Katana and proceeded to the sounds of fighting in the distance. She began to take a small syringe from her left breast pocket and injected herself in the heart, unleashing a multitude of chemicals to

give her an edge momentarily and give her a shaper sense of her surroundings that she had before. She began to pick up the pace and sprinted to the front.

Maul and Ventress were both relentless. None of the two gave ground lightly, and both gave as well as they received. Yet, it was Ventress who began to falter as she slipped and fell on her back, in the same position as her partner was earlier. She parried vicious strikes and struggled to get back up. Maul saw that she turned her back on him momentarily and took the opportunity to charge and skewer her from behind. Before he could do so, however, a Hardlight shield bashed at him, stunning him and forcing him at the defensive as he was assaulted by the now one handed Barriss Offee, who used her left arm to use as a shield while she used her good arm to assault him.

She kept attacking, taking blows with her shield and kept on him, while Maul was on the defensive, slightly shocked that despite her sudden loss of her left appendage, she fought on as though she was never affected. She kept on pushing and pushing until she cornered Maul on the edge of the corner.

She did not let up, and Maul noticed that she had her anger in her attacks, as her expression was cold, yet her eyes betrayed the fire that only glows bright with anger. He locked their blades together, and surprisingly, even with his mastery of the Force, she held her ground.

"I sense the anger in you, little girl," he said calmly, despite his predicament. "You have the power, the means to achieve it, don't you feel it too? Calling out to you? Telling you to grasp the moment, and to take it all for yourself?" He hissed.

Barriss looked down for the moment, but her strength did not wane. "You are right. IT is tempting to take it all for myself. It is truly power that I see the means to take it all_." She emphasized. This surprised Maul that she admitted it easier than any Jedi would. Deciding that he had the upper hand, he leaned in closer and grinned.

"Then why don't you get it all for yourself? You can feel the Dark Side, whispering, calling your name to take it all." He said, genuinely believing that his only way out was to tempt her to the Dark Side. "Your anger at the Jedi's blindness that in their arrogance, they left all of those who they sworn to defend, helpless and I know for a fact, that they are the instigators of most of the sufferings in the galaxy. Why fight for them, when you can fight for yourself."

"Perhaps." She said, but then she began to push him back, shocking him as he was putting his strength behind his weapon, a strength not even Obi-Wan can overcome so easily. "But I am tired of hearing such lies, blatant lies, that killed many of my friends and innocents in this galaxy, Maul. I am tired of hearing the Dark Side calling out to me when I am angry of the world. And I am tired, of seeing oppressors like you and Sidious, and you know what?" She continued, still pushing back, and looked right at him with a cold fury that is unseen by Maul before. "I am sick to death hearing people like you think that they can manipulate me further. I choose my life, and I choose to end yours!" She exclaimed and pushed her opponent with a fury, disarming the Sith in the process and leaving him defenseless.

And the next thing she did was use her handless left arm and lifted him up, using her Force powers to grip him the throat, and brought him closer to her face, which seemed to be as hard as stone.

"And I have been taught a phrase about such things and what to do with them: De Oppresso Liber. To Free the Oppressed. Mandalore has been under Oppression for a long time now. And it needs one more thing to gain their Freedom: Your blood." She declared with a cold tone.

Suddenly Maul could feel his neck and body beginning to slow turn as the former Jedi spoke. The pressure on his spinal cord starting to build up, as his head stayed perfectly still. He could see the look within Barriss' eyes as his body continued to twist unnaturally, it was not a look of a cold blooded killer, but of someone who had been pushed to the very limit both mentally, spiritually and physically.

During his fight with his opponent, the Sith had tried to make Barriss turn towards the dark side. But what he had done was sown the seeds of his own demise, for a brief moment Maul could have sworn that this former Jedi was enjoying what she was doing, but he would never know the truth. For moments later, his spinal cord violently ripped apart, as Barriss had caused the Sith's body to do a complete 180 degree turn. His face now aligned with his back. And with that one act, a violent and troubled chapter in Madolore's history had come to an end.

Ventress slowly approached her partner, who was looking at the corpse with a blank stare. Ventress placed her hand on her shoulder and said. "Your hand will be fine once we get to the ship. Are you in any pain?" She asked with genuine concern, but was confident her wound isn't permanent

Barriss shrugged. "This won't last. I can take the pain." She said nonchalantly. Ventress then said. "HQ, this is Shadow 1-2. Objectives complete, I have a wounded partner with me and requesting med evac." She waited for the reply as Barriss looked on with detachment. She knew she needed to brief Kal Skirata on the Forerunner ruins right now, but her partner did not hear any of it, and insisted she leave it up to her.

With a sigh, she agreed. After all, it was just ruins. What could possibly go wrong there?

{Forerunner Ruins, Meanwhileâ€|}

Unfortunately, things did not go well as planned. Fi had been deciding to investigate some of the control panels and he looked into one console that was flashing. Everyone was on alert, so Fi decided to see for himself what it was. Firebrand was working on the systems when she saw the defense grid network and realized that it was still active, it was simply waiting for someone to activate the prompt command to activate it. And the flashing console that Fi saw was the defense console.

If Fireteams Napalm and Gospel did not bring any of their bubble shields with them, they would have lost a lot of people that day. Firebrand tried to get to the console but she was blasted back by an

explosion caused by the defense AI, which looked like Sentinels units, knocking her out, and leaving Hannah "Nova" Novak in command for now. Dennis "Gopher" Gostibule had a bad injury in the left shoulder and Fleur "Filler" De Castro was hit square in the chest, but got off with a slight burn, thanks to the armor. Even Firebrand was hit in the shoulder, but she was out cold.

It was then that they were swarmed by more sentinels, now accompanied by bipedal, humanoid figures that were using a variety of Forerunner Weaponry, and their bodies were bulky and armored, with their heads looking like those of the flying Sentinels. Overall, this was a new foe they faced, with the majority of the new foe being blue in color and Filler spotted a single red one directing them, as she saw it transporting troops and using the sentinels as cover when it moved.

"THIS IS YOUR ENTIRE FAULT!" Darman yelled as he ducked behind cover.

"HOW IS THIS MY FAULT? I JUST PRESSED ONE BUTTON! How was I supposed to know it was the defense console?" Fi yelled as he dodged a bright projectile that hit his cover and disintegrated it.

Hannah "Nova" Novak, Spartan IV leader of Fireteam Gospel, then said. "Save it you two, we need to get to the console before more Prometheans come in." She pointed out and began blasting at the Promethean Knights that materialized all over the room.

Now the Spartans eyed the console and it was decided that Omega and the rest of Gospel, minus Nova and Filler, who was providing the over watch even in her wounded state, will advance to the console as the rest will give them cover fire and treating the wounded. Filler then saw some more enemies advancing towards the group and warned them "Heads up, hostile force at your 3 o' clock!" She used her assault rifle to get them away from the group as she was now under fire, but was backed up by her squad mates. Firebrand woke up and then took command.

She then called for back-up. "Overlord, this is Napalm, do you copy, over? We are under heavy attack an unknown Forerunner defense AI and I need some reinforcements, how copy?" She said calmly even as a shot nearly perforated her skull. Overlord answered.

"Solid copy, Napalm. Skirata is near and is bringing his team to you. Commander Orar is closest to your position by 5 minutes. Can you hold til then, acknowledge?"

"Overlord, this is Napalm. Solid copy, we can hold the line, and I think we see the defense grid console, so we can handle it until reinforcements arrive." She replied. The link closed and now they were on their own for 5 minutes.

Gospel and Omega teams should have made it to the supposed location of where Fi located the defense console, but the platform holding it shifted and was now protected heavily by Sentinel Guardians and a new Forerunner AI type that looked more like a large beetle with a flamethrower like weapon on the "mouth" and an energy mortar capable of spewing Hardlight energy and bombarding the enemy at long range.

Nova and Napalm saw the Commander and issued orders quickly. "Focus fire on the Red one. He is directing the hostiles to our position." Sure enough, projectiles of both energy and bullet went flying at the red Sentinel as its shields are barely holding from the onslaught. The Sentinels swarmed and used their bodies to cover the leader as it used some sort of jetpack-like device on its back to move to higher ground.

"Damn it!" Filler swore as her shot disappeared behind the Sentinels. "They seem to be protecting the leader with everything they got." She remarked as she saw the red one jump down, behind the metal Beatle and began ordering it to fire at their position, using a mortar-like weapon on its back and firing on Napalm's position. "MOVE!" Nova yelled as all Spartans in the area sprinted as the energy discharge blew the area they were in.

They were really starting to feel the pressure building. If they did not take that Red Forerunner AI out, they would be in deep waters. Fortunately, reinforcements arrived.

Mandalorian Ne'tra Kad and True/New Mandalorian troopers descended from the entrance, led by Commander Marik Mareel-Orar.

He moved with remarkable grace and flexibility, blasting through most of the Sentinels as though they were merely practice targets and using his jetpack to great effect, getting to high vantage points and dispatching more Guardians and even taking out the arm of the large red Commander Guardian that was directing the defenses. It was now wounded, and left open. The Sentinels began to surround the leader once more, until someone brought rocket launchers and soon, both the Swarms of Sentinels and their leader that they tried to protect turned into scrap metal.

Afterwards, it was all easier to deal with the defenses and reach the security console, and deactivated the Sentinels.

"Took your time, didn't you?" Nova asked. Commander Mareel-Orar shrugged. "Hey, when we get there, we get there.

Overlord, who was accompanied by Fireteam Crimson and Kal Skirata, arrived to survey the damage and get a report from Fireteam Napalm.

Firebrand reported in. "No casualties, but we took a lot of hits, and Filler needs a medavac." She grunted as she realized she too was shot in the shoulder, but she had a lot of adrenaline to notice the injury until now. Overlord took notice and called Wren in. "Get your team to a medic. You're done for the day." He said, but had a slight tenderness in his tone that was unnoticeable by most.

Firebrand smiled slightly at him, and she and her team were escorted out. Wren came over and touched Overlord's shoulder pads slightly. "Don't worry, she'll be fine." She said. While she loved Lance, she knew that Sofia had feelings for him as well, but in the end, Wren won him over. She knew better than to feel jealous at him.

Overlord became serious as he walked over to Skirata.

"I hope that your men's lives were worth this thing. My men nearly got hit in the process too." Skirata frowned, still skeptical to the

ruins. "I still can't believe this damn thing was under our home planet this entire time."

"Compared to their other works, Skirata?" Lance said. "This is a small thing they did, and it was easy compared to their Shield Worlds."

Kal grimaced "And that's what worries me. What if the Empire gets a hold on these Forerunner weapons? Who knows how much more powerful those bastards could become."

Lance looked at him hard and said. "That is why we are gonna get to them first. But for now, we will discover what this place was holding out on us." He said, before he and his team escorted Skirata further in the ruins.

****FINALLY I AM DONE! Thank Nightsalker for his awesome death scene with Maul. Thanks, man! Please review. I would like to have feedback please. Sorry this took so long.****

End
file.